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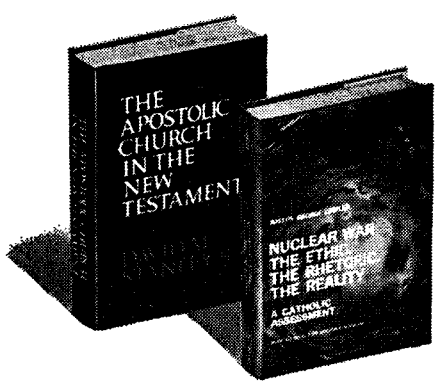


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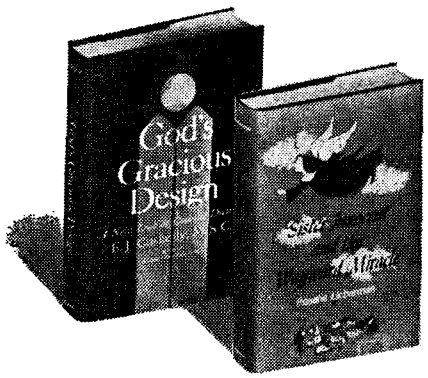


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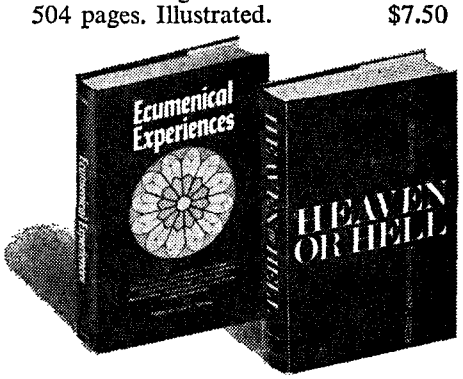


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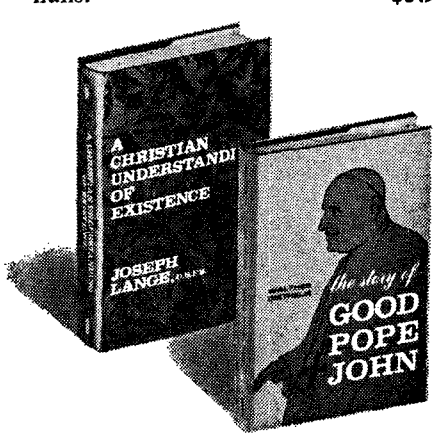


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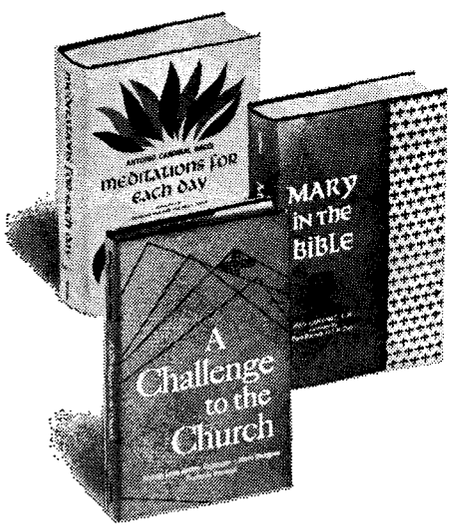


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# CORRESPONDENCE

### *Orestes Brownson*

Chicago, Ill.

*To the Editors:* On a recent Sunday morning, I participated at Mass with Orestes A. Brownson. We were in the crypt of the Sacred Heart Church on the campus of the University of Notre Dame. It was an early Mass. I sat at the end of a pew. A foot away, in the center aisle, was my old friend, Orestes. His mortal remains were underneath a stone slab. The inscription gave his name and the dates (1803-1876), followed by a summary, in Latin, of his achievements.

One of his greatest achievements was his doctrine on Church and State, in which he resolutely affirmed the rights of the individual conscience in religious matters to be inviolable by the temporal power. That doctrine is almost ready to be sanctioned in a final manner by the current Vatican Council, thanks especially to the prodigious work of John Courtney Murray, S.J. All are aware of the debt owed to Father Murray. Relatively few are aware that Father Murray's views, so bitterly challenged just a few years ago, are substantially those of Orestes A. Brownson.

It was through the encouragement of Father Murray, that I wrote my "Orestes Brownson on Church and State," which appeared in *Theological Studies* in its issue of June, 1954. I spent six months writing the article. I feel it was about the most thorough piece I have ever written on any subject. The article demonstrated that the views of Father Murray, so carefully developed by this Jesuit scholar, found confirmation in the works of Catholic America's outstanding nineteenth-century thinker.

I have had a long association with Orestes. As an undergraduate, I was introduced to him by one of my Vincentian teachers at De Paul University in Chicago. For three years I read his works (the whole twenty volumes), practically every hour on the hour, and practically day and night. I read and reread. It was my liberal education. It was one of the best.

I could not understand, while poring over him, why a man of such intellectual strength and courage, such erudition, such power of logical thinking, and such honesty of conviction, should have been so completely forgotten by the mass of literate Americans.

Years later, Professor Perry Miller of Harvard University, was to provide part of the answer to my problem in his *The American Transcendentalists.* Brownson had not been so much casually forgotten as *deliberately* ignored by the other literary lights of his time, after he entered the Catholic Church in 1844. Miller informs us that Brownson's former associates in the Transcendentalist movement (such men as Emerson, Parker, Channing, etc.) had "virtually entered into a tacit conspiracy to expunge his name from the record." They succeeded mighty well. Only a relatively few American historians, like Miller and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., have given him his due.

But good old Orestes is now back with us. A thousand years hence, when Transcendentalism itself will have been all but forgotten, the doctrine of Orestes on Church and State will still be a part of the Church's teaching.

Congratulations, Orestes! Your work was not in vain!

FRANCES E. MCMAHON

### *"Is God Dead?"*

Claremont, Calif.

*To the Editors:* Daniel Callahan in his "Comment" on the Death of God theologians [Nov. 5] starts out in a polemical way and ends by telling us that we must take the radical theology seriously. It seems to me an opposite approach might be more appropriate. We should start out by taking them more seriously and end up by taking them less seriously. First of all, it is misleading to begin by declaring that the phrase, "God is Dead," which Hamilton, *et al.*, propose to take seriously is a linguistically meaningless phrase. It is meaningless only if you presuppose a certain meaning of the word God; namely, the philosopher's God Who is the presupposition and ground of Being. Such a God clearly cannot die.

But if you start out primarily with that concept of God which has been most important in contemporary Protestant theology of the Neo-orthodox school; namely, the Lord of history, the God Who intervenes and encounters man in his existential situation, then it is clear that for modern man in general, this God has died. This death is essentially a death in human consciousness, i.e. we are no longer aware of this God. We hear about Him in the Bible, but we do not encounter Him ourselves. Even Barth testified to this fact. For Hamilton and the others, coming out of the Post-Bultmannian moment in theological thought, a word-event, or an event in consciousness is a real event, a historical event, and therefore this death of God in modern consciousness must be taken seriously as a historical event, as an objective event.

What Hamilton particularly is trying to do is to take this event seriously and to inquire after its meaning without presupposing his answer in the way that he poses the question; i.e. to remain really open to what the real answer may be. When all this is said about the reasons for taking the radical theology seriously at the outset, in conclusion, the whole project still does not seem to me to be very serious. For many contemporaries, having absorbed the new ontological theology in its Tillichian or Whiteheadean form, the word God is still quite meaningful, but what is all this Jesus stuff? ROSEMARY RUETHER

### *Reply*

Mrs. Ruether's distinction between the "philosopher's God" and that God Who is the "Lord of history" is a useful one; and so is her distinction between the "death of God" in a metaphysical sense and in the sense of an event in human consciousness. But I am not as confident as she that the death-of-God theologians write within the confines of such distinctions. Hamilton, for one,



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has specifically stated that he does not like the idea of "event": "Does 'death of God' refer to an event? . . . I am inclined to avoid the idea of 'event' altogether . . ." (*Christian Century,* Oct. 6). On the face of it, then, Hamilton's own words would seem to deny Mrs. Ruether's reading of his aims. Yet in the same passage Hamilton also describes the "death of God" as "something that is happening to a particular group of modern Western Christians today." That part of the passage seems to lend some credence to Mrs. Ruether's observation.

Thomas J. Altizer clearly sees the "death of God" as an event. Paul van Buren, by contrast, works primarily with traditional philosophical concepts of God rather than with the "Lord of history." He has specifically said that he finds the phrase "death of God" linguistically meaningless. In brief, then, I would be wary of trying to see their theology as springing from the same currents of Neo-Orthodox or post-Bultmannian thought. Each appears to work with a rather different concept of God and to start from a different point.

Whether all of this should be taken seriously is problematical; in contrast to Mrs. Ruether I think it should. My own impression of "many contemporaries" is that the "new ontological theology" is not nearly so alive as "all this Jesus stuff."

DANIEL CALLAHAN

### "Cameron on Vietnam"

Leeds

*To the Editors:* I am sorry my name tolls no bells for Mr. Wall [Oct. 22]. Perhaps he is not so faithful a reader of this magazine as he claims to be. He challenges my statement that American policy in Vietnam has few admirers and few supporters and cites against me articles by Mr. Murphy in *Fortune.* If your readers will turn to the October issue of this periodical they will find what is, to me, a quite horrifying article about Thailand. This article, however, illustrates very accurately the kind of support I had in mind when I said there was very little of it. Nothing I said was intended to deny that there

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## FROM GLORY TO SHAME

One of the oldest charges against the Church is that it is a monolith. That charge never made a great deal of sense, but it becomes positively hilarious when confronted with a few recent facts about life in the Church. Within the space of a week the Council Fathers took a final vote and affirmed the Church's dedication to religious liberty; saw promulgated a progressive decree on Divine Revelation and a promising decree on the Apostolate of the Laity; heard Pope Paul VI point out the importance of implementing the Council's work once the final session was completed. From the perspective of a few year's back, the progress has been phenomenal; not only, it appears, could the Church in theory reform itself but it has been doing so in practice.

But the same week also saw still another phenomenon, this one profoundly disturbing. For at the same moment the Church was congratulating itself on the work of the Council, a Jesuit priest, Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., was being summarily ordered out of the diocese of New York. Neither the New York chancery office nor Father Berrigan's superiors have given any explanation of his removal; they have said nothing at all. In fact, the only public knowledge of his plight came from an ad hoc committee called "Clergy Concerned about Vietnam," of which Father Berrigan was a co-chairman. The other co-chairmen of the Committee, Rabbi Abraham Heschel and the Reverend John Neuhaus (Lutheran), said of his removal that "We find it difficult to appreciate a form of religious authority that is exercised in a manner offensive to our common Jewish and Christian understanding of human dignity."

Those are charitably mild words. For the fact of the matter is that Father Berrigan's removal is a shame and a scandal, a disgustingly blind, totalitarian act. Can we put it more strongly? If we had the words to do so, we would. But perhaps it was only an isolated case? We wish we could say that. But the same week that saw Father Berrigan's removal saw the



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silencing of a Franciscan priest in Albany. And some months ago, Father Berrigan's brother, Father Philip Berrigan, S.S.J., was removed from the faculty of the Josephite Seminary in Newburgh, New York. And then, within the last 18 months, Fathers DuBay, Coffield, Halloran, etc., etc., were punished in Los Angeles. And those are only the publicly known incidents.

What were their crimes? They followed their consciences. They tried to get across to the people the meaning of the Church's teaching on race and on war. Sometimes they were wrong in what they said; who isn't sometimes? But they were doing the work of priests. What more could be said in their defense?

## SPEAK UP, MR. JOHNSON

The bloody fighting in the Iadrang River valley means only one thing: another moment of crucial decision will shortly be facing the Administration. Such a moment occurred last July when the Administration chose to move 100,000 men and vast amounts of equipment into Vietnam; to construct almost impregnable fortresses along the Pacific; and to initiate a campaign of aerial bombardment in South Vietnam which has kept the Vietcong on the run at the price of pounding to bits the country we are out to "save."

Those decisions were made on the basis of a conviction that the U.S. had to convince North Vietnam of its staying power if Hanoi was to be brought to the negotiating table. The U.S. and Saigon had to demonstrate they could hold their own during the monsoon season, and go on the offensive once clear weather returned. Then we could "negotiate from strength."

The reasoning was only half-right. Indeed, the French appear to the convinced that another Dienbienphu is now impossible. It is not, however, the French we are fighting. The problem is what Hanoi and the Vietcong think. And in this regard, the U.S. may have disastrously underestimated the striking parallel between its own position and that of North Vietnam.

Why should not Hanoi employ precisely the same reasoning as the State Department—but in reverse? Why should it not choose to feed men and equipment into the South during the dry season, fighting desperately to hold its own and hoping to go back on the offensive during next year's monsoon? Why should not Hanoi, also, feel the necessity to negotiate only "from strength"?

This appears to be exactly what has happened. And this means that the range of alternatives in Vietnam is growing horrifyingly narrow. The bloodletting can simply continue in South Vietnam, each side upping its forces round by round, while the U.S. casualties, let alone those of Vietnamese civilians, mount into the hundreds of thousands. Or perhaps the U.S., its troops being ambushed by North Vietnamese regulars, will be sorely tempted to first threaten an invasion of the North, and then be cornered into backing that threat up.

The consequences of either of these courses are fearful. In both cases, the U.S. faces up to *fourteen* tough, jungle-trained, North Vietnamese divisions—and Japan swept all of Southeast Asia with only six. In the case of an invasion of the North: (a) negotiations would become nearly impossible; (b) China might move in at least by infiltration; and (c) the U.S. would have raised the stakes so high that a Korean-type settlement would look like a great victory for China. The "out" offered by the Goldwater-Air Force lobby, that we wage the war by bombs, against Hanoi and if necessary against China, remains unsupported. There is little evidence left for the theory that bombing leads to negotiations and settlement.

Meanwhile, the domestic political consequences are threatening. Mr. Nixon is beating the drums for both a "victory" and a quick exit from Vietnam. Thus ending the war opens Johnson to charges of defeatism, continuing it to charges of "too-little, too-late." He may yet see the Great Society washed down the drain in a flood of GOP xenophobia.

What to do? First, America must realize that the best time for peace feelers is not after smashing victories but after ambiguous engagements, like some we have seen in the past weeks. Then, both sides can tell themselves that this was a victory, and feel that they have shown the strength to negotiate from.

Second, President Johnson, perhaps in response to the peace march on Washington, should address the nation. He should call for negotiation. He should redeem the trustworthiness of the Administration by explaining its reaction to Hanoi's 1964 offer to negotiate. He should damp down the fires of chauvinism which threaten all he has accomplished. He should repeat his Johns Hopkins' warning that "the guns and the bombs, the rockets and the warships, are all symbols of human failure." A mere gesture? We would call it leadership.

## DECREE ON THE LAITY

For some years now, the main question about the layman's role in the work of the Church has not been whether he should have a role but what it should be and how it should be implemented. These latter problems have come down to two basic questions: where



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does the layman gain his right to take an active part in the work of the Church; and what is the specific competence and scope of the layman's activities? The "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" now provides a reasonably clear answer to these questions. On the source of the layman's rights the Council Fathers have now said that "The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation . . ." and also that "The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head." On the specific competence of the laity, the Fathers have said that "The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation."

Because the decree emphasizes these two fundamental points it marks a major step in the life of the Church. Prior to the Council there was considerable uncertainty whether the lay apostolate had to be thought of exclusively in terms of specific mandates given the laity by the episcopacy; or whether the layman had rights and missions which sprang directly from his confirmation and baptism. There can be uncertainty no longer. Though the Decree still gives formally organized lay activities, "Catholic Action," an important place, it makes clear that the individual apostolate "is the origin and condition of the whole lay apostolate, even of the organized type, and it admits of no substitute."

Though there was considerably less debate prior to the Council on the layman's relationship to the world, there did develop much discussion about the layman's place in the Church. On the former point, the Decree is sufficiently strong to scotch any lingering suggestion that somehow the layman's only duty is to think of the world solely in terms of his own salvation. It is explicit about his duties to the nation and to the international community. On the latter point, the Decree is less successful. It provides practically no support for those, beginning with Cardinal Newman, who have argued that the laity should be consulted in matters of doctrine. And while it speaks strongly about the value of lay collaboration in the work of the parish and the diocese, the emphasis falls on the need for laymen to prepare themselves to assume an active role, rather than on pastors' providing them with an opportunity to do so.

In sum, the Decree marks a significant advance, but it still leaves unresolved one very practical question: are the clergy and bishops now *required* to make use of the laity, to take their opinions seriously, or does this still remain an optional matter? The importance of the layman's work in the world is now solidly established; his importance within the Church is still ambiguous.

## THE OAS IN RIO

If there is such a thing as the "American Century," it is a tiger, and U.S. foreign policy has been riding it during the past year without much grace. Our troubles in Southeast Asia are barely manageable; when we turn to Latin America, it is with hysteria, as in the Dominican Republic, or gullibility, as with our debilitating association with the Branco government in Brazil. The trouble with being on top is that there is only one way to go from there, and that is down. The best, if most inconsistent, thread of our cold war policy has posed another possibility, that is, to help raise other countries to our level of prosperity. It is an ideal solution to our historical predicament, and not less valid for that. It demands a choice, however. The Conference of the OAS meeting in Rio de Janeiro offers the U.S. a chance to pick up the thread again.

The Frei government of Chile, whose democratic, progressive rule is of the sort that had been envisioned in the Alliance for Progress, has been engaged with the U.S. in talks about economic and political reforms in the inter-American system. The temper of the discussion can be guessed at from Chile's most startling proposal. Chile wants the U.S. to commit itself by treaty to contribute a specific yearly sum to the development of Latin American countries. Under the scheme, the U.S. would have no say in how the money is spent. It is doubtful America will accept the proposal, and for good reasons. Nonetheless, there is need for economic cooperation in the hemisphere that is unprecedented in both kind and scope. Something like what Chile is proposing will eventually be necessary.

Another proposal, also unprecedented in kind and scope, is being debated at the Conference, and that is the U.S. plan for a standing inter-American peace-keeping force. The question of such a force arose from our Dominican intervention, and our present attempt to institutionalize it may be just a clumsy effort at delayed justification. On the other hand, for Americans, who enjoy the blessings of a unified continent, there is always great appeal in such undertakings.

This, however, is putting the best face on what is undoubtedly a highly dangerous impulse. The fact that Brazil is our strongest supporter for this proposal, and that she, along with a group of small, largely reactionary governments, has supplied troops to the OAS force in the Dominican Republic, should be enough to make the scheme suspect. Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, which constitute whatever hope remains for a peaceful, prosperous Latin America, avoided any connection with it, and strongly oppose the present plan.



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Intervention, *per se*, is distasteful to Latin Americans not simply because its greatest practitioner has been the U.S., but also because of the recurrent disputes between the Latin nations themselves. They have nothing to do with Communism. Border troubles currently exacerbate relations between Ecuador and Peru, and between Chile and Argentina. The unsolicited intervention of outsiders at this state of hemispheric disunity would be decidedly unhealthy for the whole inter-American system.

The choice is between a U.S. hegemony in Latin America that must always be precarious, and a source of temptation to get rough, and the Chilean emphasis that promises eventually to lift Latin America to equal partnership with the U.S. Chile has had the sense to see that the U.S. can't have both. If hemispheric unity holds any appeal for Americans, it should be a unity based on economic cooperation and mutual help. Only then can the OAS hope to police itself without adding to cynicism and hatred.

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**NATIONAL AFFAIRS**

# *CRISIS OF THE CITIES*

The dramatic election of John V. Lindsay as Mayor of New York has called national attention to the crisis through which most American cities are now passing. New York is the biggest and the sickest of the urban giants, but its problems are not unique.

The cities of the north and west are having to cope with the multiple difficulties of several million Negroes. Those difficulties are the consequence of two centuries of slavery and a century of segregation, economic deprivation, inadequate education, and political inequality. The so-called Moynihan Report, prepared by former Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel P. Moynihan, analyzes some of the effects of these centuries of exploitation and humiliation in terms of the social disorganization of many Negro families and the disorientation of many individual Negroes. Chicago and New York and Detroit and Los Angeles have now to make up for the sins and the failures of Virginia and Alabama and Mississippi.

As the Negroes have moved into the cities, the whites have moved out. In the past fifteen years, nearly a million whites have moved out of New York City and nearly a million Negroes and Puerto Ricans have taken their place. There can be no effective solution to this flight by the whites until the Negroes cease to be associated in white minds with crime, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency and slums. To break this association and to create an economic basis for all Negro families to lead secure, dignified lives will require—as the Urban League and other organizations have urged—a Negro economic bill of rights financed by the domestic equivalent of a Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan cost $14,000,000,000; an investment in bringing the Negro families out of their rural slums and urban ghettos could easily cost three or four times that amount. The figure seems staggering, but it is no more than the $56,000,000,000 the federal government will have spent in building the interstate highway system by its completion in 1972. And the Eisenhower Administration, and a rather conservative if Democratic-controlled Congress, started the interstate highway program in 1956 with barely a murmur of controversy. A Marshall Plan for the American Negroes involving expenditure on this scale for public works projects to create additional jobs, for more housing, and more social services would be an investment in social order and domestic tranquillity. The alternative, as every big city mayor suspects, is another round of race riots, more fearsome than those that shook Los Angeles last summer.

No city government can muster the money to make this kind of capital investment. Only the federal government with its graduated income taxes on corporate and personal incomes can raise the necessary tax revenues. What is likely to happen over the next five years is that the major cities will, in effect, throw themselves upon the mercy of Washington and demand far greater financial help as an alternative to bankruptcy or social disorder.

The help is likely to take several unfamiliar forms. Jane Jacobs, the architecture critic, startled a panel of last May's White House Conference on Natural Beauty with her proposal that the federal government provide funds for the care and upkeep of city parks. Traditionally nothing has seemed more exclusively a local concern than a city's parks. But the truth is that as city governments strive to find operating funds for schools, hospitals and other imperative services, they have skimped on the maintenance of their parks and public buildings. Yet a city without attractive, usable parks is a city closed in upon itself. Moreover, in terms of the



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Negro unemployment problem, park maintenance involves many unskilled jobs, the very jobs in increasingly short supply in this technological society. Park maintenance can put untrained men to work if only Congress can be persuaded that leaf-raking projects are not un-American.

The mass transit systems and the commuter railroads are also potential conduits for federal aid to the cities. In 1964, Congress passed a law to provide modest sums for re-equipping mass transit systems; in 1965, it passed another law to finance a test of new equipment for faster railroad service for passengers. Both these measures were in the nature of pilot projects. They were enacted with many attendant warnings to the effect that Congress would never – repeat, never – sanction operating subsidies for local subways and bus lines or for passenger rail service. Yet it is doubtful that either local transit or passenger rail service can operate at reasonable fares unless they receive operating subsidies. The alternative to such subsidies is the ever-increasing reliance upon automobiles for daily transportation. And the private automobile is already strangling the city's streets with traffic and polluting its air with deadly gasoline fumes.

The cities are helpless to go much beyond their present range of effort in solving their problems because they compete with their own suburbs. Real estate taxes, sales taxes, and nuisance taxes are already high in the cities. As they go higher, they push more people to the suburbs.

The tangle of political jurisdictions also ties down the typical metropolitan city. There is the state legislature which until the present court-ordered reapportionment has traditionally been rural-controlled and which even under the new redistricting may be dominated by an unsympathetic alliance of rural areas and suburbs. Then there is the conflict between adjoining states. Many of Philadelphia's problems overlap those of Delaware; many of New York's can only be solved in cooperation with New Jersey and Connecticut. The independent authorities set up to deal with special metropolitan needs are often as much trouble as they are a help. Thus, the Port of New York Authority and the bridge-and-tunnel authorities created to administer the access in and out of New York have become independent empires; they are likely to prove quite unresponsive to any mandate Mayor-elect Lindsay may believe he has received from the voters of the city. It is often suggested that the ideal solution would be to annex the suburbs to the city and thus establish a single metropolitan political unit. But something very much like that ideal solution already exists in Los Angeles. The effect has been that the voters in the parts of the city which elsewhere would be independent suburban towns have combined to elect a mayor—Sam Yorty—who *is* manifestly unsympathetic to the plight of the Negroes or, in fact, to the very real needs of the core city.

In short, there are no easy answers and even some of the complicated, expensive answers may not work. The election of John Lindsay only indicated that the resilient New Yorkers had not quite given way to total despair. New leadership does not mean a new day, but it does signal a new attack on the most embattled sector of American life.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON


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# MEN OF THE '30s

*A contemporary look at five literary figures*

**RICHARD KOSTELANETZ**

No decade of American culture has been as thoroughly and frequently repudiated, as a cultural entity, as the nineteen thirties; for the past fifteen years have witnessed a continuing barrage of confessions of mistaken political beliefs and affiliations, rejections of earlier cultural and literary presuppositions, and systematic re-evaluations of reputations of thirties' writers, to deflate the realists (James T. Farrell and John Dos Passos) and elevate the modernists (William Faulkner, Henry Roth and Nathanael West). No other cultural generation has lived to see itself so completely dismissed as duped and irrelevant, or so many of its accepted pieties laid to rest among the deadest ideas.

In retrospect, the thirties seems a decade that not only espoused fallacious thoughts but also killed budding talents. Of all the composers who became involved with folk-American music, which passed out of critical fashion and onto the Broadway stage, only one was ever able to return to the modernist tradition and compose a piece of artistic consequence—Aaron Copland, in his *Piano Fantasy* of 1957 and his *Connotations for Orchestra* of 1962. Much the same happened in art, except that a few painters once loyal to the proletarian-muralist style were, by an act of metamorphosis, to become reborn as Action Painters. Likewise, the novelists and poets who emerged in the twenties—Hemingway, Faulkner, E. E. Cummings, and Hart Crane—and the forties—Bellow, Ellison, Lowell, and Roethke – are superior, in both achievement and development, to the best of the thirties' – West, Roth, Rukeyser (?), Schwartz (?), and Warren (?). Even in literary criticism, no one who "started out" in the thirties strikes us as consistently excellent and prolific as Edmund Wilson or as original and profound as Kenneth Burke, both of whom came of age in the twenties, or as various and perceptive as Stanley Edgar Hyman, Joseph Frank or Leslie A. Fiedler, all of whom started publishing in the forties.

Although it is difficult to trace specifically why a certain era seems, in retrospect, less congenial to producing first-rate talents—to explain the exact relations between the spirit of the age and the processes of excellence—we can still judge, comparatively, that certain cultural climates are more favorable than others and, more specifically, that the thirties were perhaps the least favorable of all.

Yet, there still exists, nowadays, a tendency to resurrect the thirties by saying that its writers had virtues sorely lacking in contemporary culture. So Daniel Aaron closes *Writers on the Left* with this sentimental piety: "It is less easy to scorn their efforts, however blundering and ineffective, to change the world." Attempts to revive the thirties have come from writers, like the five reviewed here, who first established themselves during the early and middle thirties: Alfred Kazin's *Starting Out in the Thirties,* Lionel Trilling's *Beyond Culture,* Philip Rahv's *The Myth and the Powerhouse,* F. W. Dupee's *The King of the Cats,* and Granville Hicks' *Part of the Truth.* These five books should display the state of the thirties' intelligence, thirty years later.

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In sum, they offer a depressing spectacle, not only because every one of the books is inadequate to its pretensions, but because they exhibit several common failures. Each of these writers, for one thing, bases his reputation less upon productivity of excellence than upon the achievement of "making the scene" so long that his name in magazine pages has acquired a favorable currency not extended to his books. Each has achieved a successful career, but little successful work. Alfred Kazin, over twenty years ago, wrote an ambitious survey of American literary culture from 1890 to 1940, *On Native Grounds* (1942), which is still the best cultural history we have of the period, though its thesis that realistic literature is typically American is thoroughly untenable and its condescending chapter on Faulkner has since been repudiated. Since 1942, Kazin has announced projected books on important subjects, but only two volumes of memoirs and two collections of journalism have ever appeared.

Lionel Trilling did a definitive study of Matthew Arnold in 1939, an insightful but critically slight volume on E. M. Forster in 1943, and several collections of essays and book-introductions, the most popular of which, *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), achieved, in retrospect, an importance based more upon its influence upon the fashionable thought of the time than any lasting ideas or judgments. The ten essays included in *Beyond Culture*, produced at the rate of about one every year, all acquired considerable mileage—as lectures, contributions to magazines in various countries, introductions, anthology pieces—before landing in this collection.

Philip Rahv was founder and editor of *Partisan Review*, one of the best literary quarterlies of recent years. Historically, the magazine's importance stems less from its services for American literature than from introducing certain foreign tendencies and writers onto the American scene—Franz Kafka, Jean-Paul Sartre, existentialism, etc.; however, the *Partisan Review* of recent years has never recaptured the immediacy and controversy and independence it had in the late forties. The writings that Rahv has decided to collect between hardcovers are two books of essays—*Image and Idea* (1944; reissued and expanded, 1957), which contains his brilliant insights on "Paleface and Redskin," and his recent *The Myth and the Powerhouse*. His oft-announced study of Dostoevsky he seems to have abandoned, for articles once published as chapters from that forthcoming work are included in the recent collection. F. W. Dupee's career could likewise be characterized more by "staying power" than intrinsic achievement—a mediocre book on Henry James, several anthologies, and a stream of journalism, of a generally predictable persuasion, some of which is republished in *The King of the Cats*, his first collection.

Granville Hicks has long been one of America's better-known secondary critics—his judgments are less the result of his own thinking than the critical fashions of the time. In the thirties, Hicks was an efficient warrior for the Communist cause; in the fifties and late sixties, he came to represent the bland, disinterested taste of *The Saturday Review*, for which he became a regular critic. Of his many books none has a favorable reputation today. In sum, none of these five, except for Kazin, ever came close to writing a book as classic and significant as *The Anatomy of Criticism*, *Axel's Castle*, *The Armed Vision*, or *Love and Death in the American Novel*, although many of them either reviewed or blurbed these masterpieces.

### *Intellectual Peale-ism*

All five of these critics exhibit a general sympathy toward positive thinking. All believe that the writer and especially the critic *ought* to have positive liberal ideas; and although Trilling, for one, will allow modern writers to be negative, he now takes a conservative position only implicit in his earlier critical writing—"the view that art does not always tell the truth or the best kind of truth and does not always point out the right way, that it can even generate falsehood and habituate us to it." The implication, in context, is that because the critic leads a more rational life, with a greater awareness of the common weal, he is more important to the health of society than the creative artist.

What is unusual in Kazin is how often his bias for positive-thinking is expressed as a sympathy for "radicals" who, upon closer inspection, seem to represent a gamut of positions ranging from programmatic democratic socialism though cultural anarchism to impulsive individualism (usually portrayed as the integrity of unsuccess). To Rahv, positive-thinking is the quality he finds lacking in cultural tendencies he dislikes; yet nowhere in this book does he define precisely what is his own positive critical or political program. Whereas Hicks has discarded the political evaluation of literature, he still worries in his reviews about the possible adverse moral effect of some contemporary works; and Dupee's ability to make every writer positive and congenial extends to such ugly ducklings as Gertrude Stein and Sir Richard Burton.

Sympathies for positive thinking, without any positive content of his own, creates in each man a style peculiarly evasive for the tasks of criticism. In Kazin's case,



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sympathetic figures evoke warm feelings, rather than agreement with their ideas; so that favorites are identified by references to personal responses and by the use of exaggerated language. "[Otis Ferguson] jumped and twitched with the restlessness of a jazz man, and from the moment he came up to you in a corridor, you felt yourself shaking with him, knees, hands and arms jangling in rhythm to some private tune." Trilling's tactic is a style whose elegance of surface, high level of abstraction, and complexity (achieved mostly through an excess of clauses) are disproportionate to the greater simplicity of his ideas. "Far better, it seems to me, is the effort to understand what this passionate hostility to society implies, to ask whether it is a symptom, sufficiently gross, of the decline of the West, or whether it is not perhaps an act of critical energy of society itself. . . ."

Rahv's style seems more smooth when it attacks negative thinking and, in contrast, positively clumsy and evasive when he offers words of praise or guidance. In Hicks and Dupee, the puffiness of the style is of a piece with the promiscuity of loving judgments; and both would seem to stem from an unwillingness to see (or let their readers see) the unattractive sides of both books and human beings or to question beneath the surface of either a work of art or an established reputation.

Nearly all five critics have a gift for dichotomizing the intellectual scene, even if the categories of split are irrelevant to real experience. Trilling sets intellectual reason and interpreted experience to one side and modern art and inspired intuition on the other, only to opt for the first island, an enclave which encompasses the World, the University, and the great middle class of book-club members. Kazin in his final pages contrasts art and imagination with criticism and intellectuals, charging that the latter forces have suppressed the former on the contemporary scene. However, any glance at cultural history should show that literature and criticism generally thrive together. Rahv puts the believers of reason and reality on one side and the exponents of life's unreason and mystery on the other, historical and "prospective" (his own term) criticism on one hand and "New," myth and "retrospective" criticism on the other, always asserting that the latter forces exhibit a weakness of intellect and an unconscious fear of "history [ , ] . . . that powerhouse of change," which is "at bottom the fear of the hazards of freedom."

None of these critics has succeeded in either gauging or influencing the contemporary sensibility; none seems to have a great interest in any art but prose or any awareness of how activities in the other arts relate to prose literature. None seems remotely able to comprehend the avant-garde impulse in our time, although Dupee makes a "college try" in his review of Kenneth Koch. As intellectuals, they seem victimized by their ideas and prejudices of what art and life ought to be, and unable to preserve an open attitude towards transformations in intellectual and artistic experience. Confronting the semblance of disorder in modern literature and life, each would seem to escape into a criticism which separates and defends them from the chaos, rather than affords them the strength and weaponry to engage it.

In three of these books, the critic portrays himself as the last individualist, the lone battler for integrity and taste amidst the cultural herd. Among Trilling's favorite postures is separating himself from what he perceives to be a cultural trend and then rising above it by analyzing its sympathies and motives; and Rahv makes a practice of rising even higher above the fashions of "our literary intellectuals"—whether they be myth criticism, the religious revival, the New Criticism—discerning in all these tendencies a common underlying motive—ye olde escape from "the actuality of experience." Kazin's memoir celebrates the integrity of unsuccess—although his own success has been immense.

Indeed, among the book's more disconcerting tendencies is Kazin's apparent lack of perception about himself. Not only is his feeling for the integrity of unsuccess a bit odd, but a major fault he attributes to Philip Rahv—an interest in personalities rather than the processes and products of the imagination—is a major failing of Kazin's own writing. Rather than reveal what I would think is the most important lesson to be drawn from his young manhood—how someone as young and poor imagined, conceived and executed his brilliant book on American literature — Kazin devotes his memoir to his own non-literary experiences and portraits of other people; likewise, Kazin's recent reviews are more about writers as personalities—as seen in their letters, their autobiographies, or some biographies of them—than imaginative work itself.

From *Starting Out in the Thirties* emerges the image of a man intellectually adrift, whose judgments are more sentimental than convincing. Suffering a loss of value, he depends more upon empathy than upon any ethic more clearly discernible than a general (and agreeable) humanism; and in this respect, Kazin is little different from Hicks, whose polemicism on behalf of small-town life (a forties reaction to his thirties Communism) has receded into a general belief in human progress.

Although Lionel Trilling's sensitivity to the subtleties



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and suggestions of texts and ideas never ceases to impress, his work suffers from a pretentiousness incommensurate with the content of his essays and an intellectual tentativeness unsuitable to the controversial character of the issues he discusses. One essay, once entitled "On the Modern Element in Modern Literature" and now called "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," is, in sum, a memoir of how he chose the reading list for his own Columbia College course (an intelligent list, at that), a record of his own experiences in teaching the course, and a few general but hardly penetrating notions about modern literature. Moreover, his rather negative feeling toward contemporary writing, not only its achievement but its purposes, is so tentatively expressed that it may well escape all but the most persistent reader.

The essays themselves are less truly finished works, informed by a clear thread, than wandering and diffuse commentaries on themes; thus, rather than expositions and argument, Trilling offers a series of thoughts; and indicatively, he frequently seizes upon "remarks" made by others. "Remarks are not literature," Gertrude Stein once supposedly told Ernest Hemingway; nor do they make substantial criticism.

Stanley Edgar Hyman once characterized Philip Rahv's favorite posture as "ethical nail-biting"; for Rahv is forever objecting to tendencies he finds disagreeable, forever disagreeing with the current literary reputation of various writers, forever suspecting other people's motives. What emerges from *The Myth and the Powerhouse* is evidence of an amazingly narrow mind—limited first in the range of its literary and historical interests and then in its taste for literature, its responses to experience, its explanatory ideas; and aside from the essays on Dostoevsky, particularly the discussion of *Crime and Punishment*, there is nothing here of any critical substance.

Even less significant is F. W. Dupee's collection which exhibits a certain talent for biographical portraiture, that kind of genial exposition that publishers love to have introduce controversial books (Dupee's yes-no-yes-no-yes essay on Gertrude Stein, for the Modern Library edition, is practically a model of the form), and the sympathetic book review (only one unfavorable judgment is reprinted—a brief review of F. R. Leavis' study of D. H. Lawrence, to rescue the good Lawrence from the overbearing Leavis). Perhaps it is a particular achievement of *The King of the Cats* that while it contains not one essay capable of giving offense, the book itself leaves a disagreeable taste.

If the world were such a nice place as Granville Hicks describes it, he would have been more popular at Harvard than he was, more influential than he is, wealthier than he is; so that his autobiography seems more a narrative of how Hicks would have liked his life to have been, rather than how it was. What is suspiciously absent from Hicks' book is any awareness of the world's evil, not only the evil one perceives by reading the newspaper but the evil that adversely affects oneself.

Most conspicuously absent from *Part of the Truth* is evidence of human passion. His prose is consistently dullish and bloodless, and his own words reveal how quickly he forgot the ideals of Communism to become an efficient functionary and how feeble were his responses to drastic events. His comments on friends rarely penetrate below physical descriptions and a record of their actions and careers. Indeed, the autobiography finally suggests that a regime of cranking out reviews and publisher's reports—he has done more of both than one would have expected—must terribly deplete the spirit.

The relations between men and their times, as we noted, are so fuzzy and indecipherable that it is, of course, glib to blame the deficiencies of these five men upon the thirties. In England, for a contrast, many of the best contemporaries, from Samuel Beckett to W. H. Auden, were active in the thirties; but perhaps the English tendency to make commitments more tentatively, as well as a more tolerant cultural scene, saved these thirties writers from more permanent damage. With these Americans, nonetheless, it is hard to believe that the experience of starting out in the thirties did not, in part at least, shape their common attitudes and failings, particularly the impulse to dichotomize complex issues, the drives for conventional success, the resistance to artistic modernism, the sentimentality for positive thinking, the overbearing interest in the moral purposes and effects of contemporary art.

The artists, writers, and critics starting out in the sixties are aware, to differing degrees, that the thirties must be rejected as completely as possible. This fact does not necessarily mean that the generation of the sixties will be better than that of the thirties, for recognizing the mistakes of one's elders hardly clears the path of obstacles. Nor does all this mean that excellence will emerge tomorrow; for as life is tragic, so better intentions and superior conditions do not necessarily produce better results. But young writers today are at least intellectually freer than their elders—free if only to recognize that peculiarly American truth that excellence is an individual's achievement. Whether in art or criticism or scholarship, "You got to go there by yourself."



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*Iris Murdoch's novels*

# THE GUISES OF LOVE

**BERNARD McCABE**

Ever since 1954, when her first novel, *Under the Net,* was published in England, Iris Murdoch has enjoyed a striking reputation. For better or worse she is a fashionable novelist. And if one looks for a general explanation of the reading-public's enthusiasm one is struck, in retrospect at least, by the way Miss Murdoch's interests, as they emerge in her novels, correspond to the dominating preoccupations of the last decade or so.

The picaresque hero of *Under the Net,* Jake Donaghue, plays various fashionable roles. He is, for instance, an outsider; he is in search of his own identity; he has a profound need to assert his individuality. The narrative presents him with a series of choices through which he struggles towards an awareness of his own limited but inalienable freedom. In the course of the book, Jake Donaghue the translator of other people's texts, cripplingly restricted by the ideas of others, becomes Jake Donaghue the free creative artist. The world about him presents a hampering net of preconceived attitudes, ideas and feelings; Donaghue must creep under the net in order to taste the fruits of free existence. In him, the philosopher-novelist Iris Murdoch (who has published a study of Jean-Paul Sartre) is offering an existentialist hero.

But that "net" image apparently comes from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* Iris Murdoch was until recently an Oxford philosophy don, and is the wife of an Oxford philosophy don. Fashionable British philosophical attitudes also play their part in *Under the Net.* At the book's intellectual center is the mysterious Hugo Belfounder, who becomes the subject of a book, "The Silencer," written by Jake Donaghue. Belfounder, who is involved at various times with a mime theater, and with "silent expressionist" movies, distrusts general propositions, distrusts discourse, ultimately distrusts words, which can all too easily betray the "uniqueness of things." Ethical situations, he is reported as teaching, can only with great difficulty be caught in words. "All theorising is flight. We must be held by the situation itself, and this is unutterably particular." Jake under his influence becomes in some degree a hero of analytical philosophy.

The novel is dedicated to Raymond Queneau, who wrote among other things *Pierrot Mon Ami, Loin de Rueil, Exercices de Style,* and, more recently, *Zazie dans le Métro.* The brilliant (and suddenly fashionable) Queneau has always been a difficult writer to place. "Surrealist" or "fantasist" seem inadequate labels, but he specializes in verbally dexterous comic narratives that move uninhibitedly in and out of a fantasy world whenever he wishes to extend his range of observation or inquiry into life in the contemporary city. *Under the Net* uses his techniques; Jake's picaresque adventures hover on the edge of fantasy. In his search for free activity he obeys sudden impulses that defy the "normal" laws of behavior, and we are led into a liberating Queneau-like world where everyday realities suffer a sort of lyric metamorphosis into inexplicability.

Again, Jake Donaghue in his search for meaningful commitment in postwar London is confronted with Socialist involvements. The figure of Lefty Todd represents a fully-committed Marxist who must, fashionably, be respected ("a man") and be fashionably rejected too, insofar as his position limits individual freedom and undervalues the "ultimate randomness" of human existence.

Finally, Jake Donaghue bears obvious family resemblances to a troop of other fashionable questioners who crop up in the literature of the nineteen-fifties: Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim.* Osborne's Jimmy Porter, the heroes of John Braine's *Room at the Top* and of John Wain's *Hurry On Down,* and to the earnest inquirer behind Colin Wilson's *The Outsider.*

All in all then, there was a wide enough range of fashionable interests and techniques displayed in Miss Murdoch's first novel. And although some of her methods have been modified, most of these interests have persisted in the rapid succession of novels (eight more to date) that have appeared in the eleven years since *Under the Net;* and her public has persisted too.

Of course it is not simply fashion that explains this

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success. Miss Murdoch's novels interest people because, apart from their skillful pacing and polish, they appear to be seriously concerned about her two central and inter-related topics – freedom and love. (A full-length study of Iris Murdoch, entitled *The Degrees of Freedom,* by A. S. Byass, has just appeared in England.) In *Under the Net,* Jake's most crucial choices in the pursuit of freedom involve awareness of others. Freedom, it is suggested, is finally only attainable in terms of this awareness. There is no easy or even unambiguous resolution of the struggle to realize one's individuality, but in the end in these novels it is defined somehow in terms of love. They are love-stories, and Miss Murdoch is concerned with defining the minimal realities of love. Towards the end of *Under the Net* Jake says to himself:

"When does one ever know a human being? Perhaps after one has realized the impossibility of knowledge and renounced the desire for it and finally ceased to feel even the need of it. But then what one achieves is no longer knowledge, it is simply a kind of co-existence; and this too is one of the guises of love."

All the novels turn out to be about the guises of love, about people who learn through the unpredictable complexities of human encounters to accept the minimal but real truths of possible "co-existence." These truths are explored in a variety of ways. Miss Murdoch is interested in extreme situations and has not ceased experimenting with methods of presenting them. So, although her second novel, *The Flight from the Enchanter,* is again set in a broad Queneau-like version of contemporary London, her third book, *The Sandcastle,* which explores a domestic triangle in the limited setting of a boys' school, and her fourth, *The Bell,* which examines a more intricate set of relationships in a lay religious community, begin Iris Murdoch's retreat into a more restricted world. *A Severed Head* and *An Unofficial Rose* present more and more complex situations amongst small intensely-involved groups of people. *The Unicorn* and *The Italian Girl* still deal with closed societies, but seem to head back towards the mythic worlds of the first books. (In fact, though, ever since Malcolm Bradbury, the English novelist and critic, pointed out a Vulcan-Venus-Mars set-up beneath the surface of *Under the Net,* one has had to read Miss Murdoch in that same uneasy stance it became necessary to adopt when watching T. S. Eliot's late plays, the backward half-look over the shoulder for latent Erinnyes or whatever.)

All these novels seek to present the ambiguities of human intercourse and human self-knowledge. They plot the shiftings of ascendancies and submissions. They illustrate the endless haphazardness of sexuality, the precariousness of virtue, the ironic frequencies of self-deception, the "persistence of problems." Answers are hard to come by. "One reads the signs as best one can, and one may be totally misled. But it's never certain that the evidence will turn up that makes everything plain." Rational organizations of experience are deceptive: "Reality is a cipher with many solutions." In the end it is best to trust in intuitions: "to read the signs in accordance with our deepest wishes is what we humans have to do."

In *The Bell,* the best of these later novels, a community which has severed itself from the world in pursuit of personal and communal fulfillment is destroyed not so much by any inner contradictions in its aims as by "the absurd and irreducible uniqueness of people and their relations to each other." In this suspense story, Miss Murdoch discusses the psychology of temptation, the catastrophic way in which it offers opportunities for self-knowledge, and she examines the puzzling relationship between sophistication—"fluency"—and moral choice: "Could one recognize refinements of good if one could not recognize refinements of evil?" the chief protagonist asks himself. *The Bell* demonstrates that people "who live by clear practical rules" are as helpless before "the real impenetrable human person," as are the uncertain idealists, the anarchically amoral, or the tormentedly malignant.

### *Symbols for Passions*

Miss Murdoch is obviously very intelligent, and she sets high standards for herself. Her stress on "the intractability of things" and on "the opaqueness of persons" is important and admirable. She also knows that it is the novelist's business to put us into possession of such insights in some "lived" way (see her article "Against Dryness," in *Encounter,* 1962). Yet how far is this awareness realized in the novels? She has become an increasingly skillful narrator—*The Bell's* intricate plot is genuinely exciting, for instance, and *A Severed Head* is a plotter's *tour de force.* Yet somehow this very skill



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emphasizes the gap between her admirable and humane intentions—the wholly satisfactory outlines of her novels—and what is in fact achieved.

The true free act has its roots in "instinctive life." The novels press this point; it is crucially important then that this instinctive life be rendered in the richest possible way. This, however, Miss Murdoch seems to have great difficulty in doing. To render the instincts and the passions and their meanings she has relied increasingly on heavily emphasized symbols, bells and castles and heads. But they don't work very well—we remain too aware of the author's will manipulating them, as it manipulates the plot.

Iris Murdoch's way of handling symbols reminds me of the British novelist L. P. Hartley (*The Go-Between*). Hartley has acknowledged his debt to Hawthorne, and one recalls Henry James' comment on Hawthorne's symbols: "when the image becomes importunate it is in danger of seeming to stand for nothing more serious than itself." Apt enough for some of Iris Murdoch's importunate elaborations, which come to seem at best merely decorative, at worst just silly like Hugo Belfounder's symbolic importance: "He towered in my mind like a monolith: an unshaped and undivided stone which men before history had set up for some human purpose which would forever remain obscure."

The portentous tone here suggests another recurring difficulty. Miss Murdoch evidently wants to present intense states of mind, people of exceptional sensibility; yet the effect is often rather high flown ("we humans"). Exalted moods emerge as something dangerously close to "gush"—"There was a path which awaited me and which if I failed to take it would lie untrodden forever. How much longer would I delay? This was the substance, and all other things were shadows, fit only to distract and deceive. What did I care for money? It was as nothing to me. In the light of that vision it had shriveled like autumn leaves, its gold turning to brown and crumbling away into dust. When I had these thoughts a profound contentment filled me."

### *The Lady-Novelist Comes Through*

Even allowing that some ironic deflation follows (the speaker finds he has not enough money to pay for his drinks) the accents here remain uncomfortably close to the sort of lady-novelist intensity that used to be associated with Iris Murdoch's fellow-Anglo-Irish-women, Katherine Tynan and Sheila Kaye-Smith, who also wrote love-stories. Her fondness for the fey and the whimsical reinforces the link. *The Sandcastle*, with "Rain Carter" in the feminine lead, has been criticized on these lines, but here is a typically Murdoch unctuous passage from *The Bell:*

"Youth is a marvelous garment. How misplaced is the sympathy lavished on adolescents. There is a yet more difficult age which comes later, when one has less to hope for and less ability to change, when one has cast the die and has to settle into the chosen life without the consolations of habit or the wisdom of maturity. . . . The very young have their troubles, but they have at least a part to play, the part of being very young."

The matronly tone—it suddenly sounds like Dorothy Sayers. (In fact, Miss Murdoch, with her talent for suspense and mystery might join that popular Oxford don detective-story group; Hugo Belfounder could step right into Lord Peter Wimsey's shoes.)

"I should like to write about Ireland, but I think I should find it very difficult not to be, in some way, absurdly emotional about it." This remark appeared on the jacket of Iris Murdoch's first book (under a charming picture of the author clutching a handsome, muscular cat). Her new novel, *The Red and the Green* (Viking), *is* about Ireland, and about the highly emotional Ireland of Easter, 1916, at that. But Miss Murdoch's strategy for controlling absurd emotion is a familiar Irish one (Synge's, O'Casey's)—she relies on farce. Thus the glorious and hopeless Easter Rising presents a very green young Irish patriot and a very red young English officer squatting handcuffed together in an empty room in silent frustration—the pursuit of freedom has led to this absurd Beckett-like impasse. Similarly, on the eve of the Rising, all the guises of love converge upon Millie, Lady Kinnard, who through the haphazardness of events finds herself obliged to entertain four of her lovers within moments of each other.

A murky and complex confrontation of English and Irish, Catholic and Protestant, patriot and traitor, saint and sinner, all shifting about, coupling and uncoupling in the Dublin rain and the Dublin whisky again is the occasion for Iris Murdoch to examine the indefinableness of situations and the necessarily surprising opaqueness of persons. All the persons are related, for she has been enclosing her characters within tighter and tighter bounds in recent novels. So Millie Kinnard is, to quote a recent reviewer: "romantically entangled with a) her half-brother, b) her nephew, c) her half-nephew, d) her sister-in-law's husband, e) her half sister-in-law's brother."

One thinks of that great (and now rather neglected) specialist in intense family entanglements, Ivy Compton-Burnett—one typical extract will make the point:



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" 'What a lovely family group,' said Emily. 'An uncle and a nephew and a brother and a sister, and an aunt and a husband and a wife, and I think some more, all in four people!' " (*Pastor's and Masters*). The comparison if pursued would, it seems to me, be all in Miss Compton-Burnett's favor, for she uses her claustrophobically close relationships to refine and intensify her moral observations (though it's all done in witty dialogue), whereas it is difficult to feel anything more than theatrical manipulation going on in *The Red and the Green.*

Perhaps through her concern not to be emotional about Ireland (it's an honest concern after all) Miss Murdoch allows Ireland and the Rising to disappear into the rain. Or at most they are there only as insubstantial, painted back-drops. The novel ends in the thirties, the lovers are all dead in the wars or grown old, and the survivors have mostly forgotten or lost interest in what Ireland's fight for freedom was all about. So Miss Murdoch edges towards her minimal statement, hedged around with ironies, of what involvement in history can mean. A middle-aged woman looks back to Easter, 1916. "For a moment it seemed to her that she had lived out, in those months, . . . the true and entire history of her heart . . . They, those others, had a beauty which could not be . . . rivaled. They had been made young and perfect forever, safe from the corruption of time and from those ambiguous second thoughts which dim the brightest face of youth."

Well, it *still* sounds too vibrant and lofty. One remembers Yeats' great poem, which is also a love-poem, *Easter, 1916.* (In fact, I'd guess that Iris Murdoch quite deliberately prods us to remember it throughout *The Red and the Green.*) For Yeats, the participants in that squalid and futile street battle had beautifully resigned their part "in the casual comedy" of haphazard life; and he took the magnificently successful risk of giving his poem the refrain "A terrible beauty is born." But I suppose Miss Murdoch is right in the end; one simply can't say things like that in 1965.

*From Winesburg to Park Ave.*

# WANTED: A PROTESTANT NOVELIST

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We have been hearing about the minority novel in America for so long now that it is refreshing to note the growing critical skepticism about the actual achievements of that novel. To have been born a member of a minority does not automatically make one a novelist, as Robert Alter pointed out in the September *Commentary.* A corollary to that is that these United States are not necessarily what they are depicted as being by Jews, Negroes, and embattled Southerners. The Jew as a symbol of contemporary alienation is natural enough, but one wonders whether that symbol, as valid as both suffering and history have made it, has not been somewhat cheapened by the kind of gimmicky self-consciousness with which it has been recently manipulated. The Negro, a more recent symbol of alienation, is undoubtedly in for the same fate, for already he is being asked by our writers to carry a burden which is as inhuman as it is self-consciously heroic. America is more than Maine and it is more than Kansas; it is also more than the Grand Concourse or 125th Street.

Perhaps what is most needed by serious American fiction today is a report from the majority, what one is tempted to call (with tongue-in-cheek) "the new Protestant novel." For if there is a single group in this country which demands re-defining, it is that of the oft-abused WASP, who, having lost much of his former certainty, suddenly wakes to find himself the boy at the bakery window gazing hungrily at all the cakes and cookies inside. The WASP world has many needs, not the least of which is for a truly talented novelist who can approach it with both empathy and detachment. For it has been, curiously enough, damned by some of our novelists without even being looked at, its very existence considered evidence enough for an indictment. But rather than depict the confrontation of the WASP with the America in which he lives today, many of our novelists prefer to see him as a mere member of the majority whose problems are trivial or else

LEONARD KRIEGEL *is the author of* The Long Walk Home (*Appleton-Century*) *and editor of* The Essential Works of the Founding Fathers (*Bantam*).



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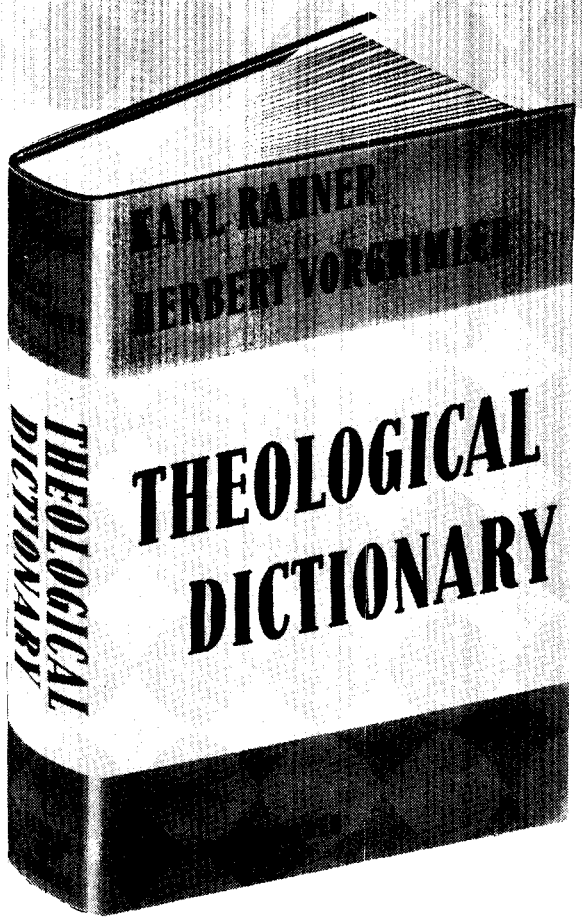


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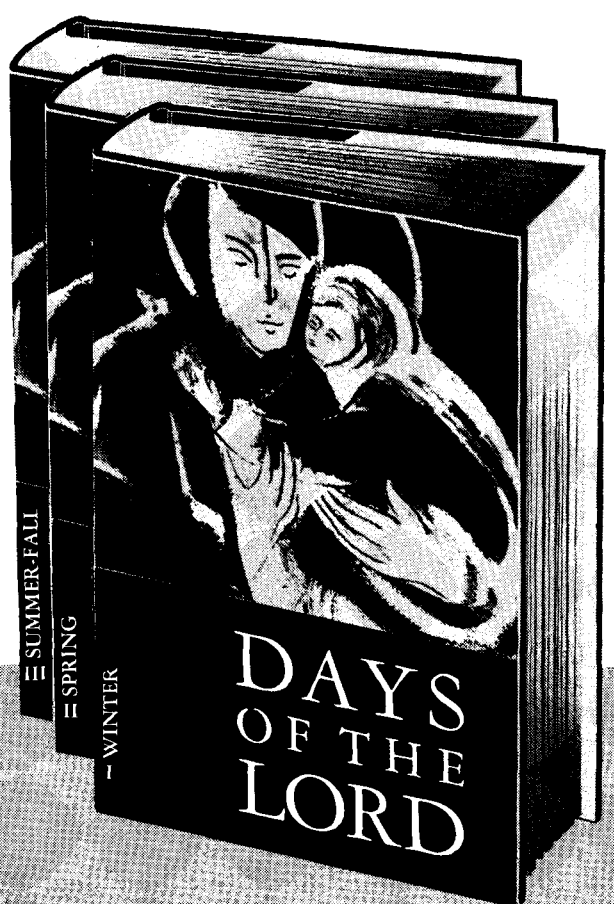


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not sufficiently *absurd* (and what a critical reservoir the *absurd* has become) enough to command serious and committed attention.

Not that there has been a dearth of Protestant novelists in this country. Even at this time, to name them would be to catalogue a substantial segment of contemporary American writers. But none of them – not Cheever, not Updike, not Cozzens – has been able to break through to that essential confrontation of the WASP with his world, to create that strange mixture of paranoia and friendliness, of conservative insularity and democratic idealism, which makes this America so bewildering to foreigner and native alike. To have given birth to *both* Richard Nixon and A. J. Muste should make any society a natural source of joy to a novelist.

The WASP world deserves far better than it has received in the way of novelists, and if one could create an ideal writer for it today he would probably be a strange hybrid, a being combining the secular vision of a Henry James with the semi-mystical relation to America that one finds in the best Sherwood Anderson, at home in Isabel Archer's drawing room and George Willard's Winesburg streets. An all-but-impossible combination, it still speaks of the complexity of WASP America. For here is a world which is beginning to suspect, probably for the first time in its history, that its values are neither as stable nor as permanent as it had assumed, that it may even be viewing its own disintegration. Time, with all its grunts and groans, is suddenly the WASP's enemy; he may soon find himself no more than another alley of historical investigation.

But in a time ripe for our hypothetical James Anderson, we still seem to be getting novelists who demand a psychic conversion, who wish to turn themselves into Jews or Negroes, to bathe in lives alien to their own – and this not in the hope of really understanding those lives but rather as a ritual ablution which will wash away old sins, such as the fact that one has been born WASP in Mid-Century America. How else can one approach the kind of novel we have in Edward Hoagland's *The Peacock's Tail* (McGraw-Hill, $5.50).

Mr. Hoagland has not written a very good novel, but he has attempted to explore a world that is very definitely foreign to what his hero (and, I presume, he) has known. Ben Pringle is a young WASP of standardly affluent background who, having lost his girl, Sandy (and having lost her, significantly, to a Jewish television producer named Bernstein who is very self-conscious about being a television producer and about being a Jew named Bernstein), his job and his apartment, leaves respectability to cast his lot with the denizens of an 83rd Street hotel called the Aspinwall, inhabited by Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and embittered whites on relief. In this choice of the novel's locale, Mr. Hoagland betrays himself and poor Ben Pringle; the "out" world of 83rd Street is portrayed for us as irresponsible, buoyant, filled with the vitality of its own exuberance and spontaneity.

But as Ben Pringle moves through the hotel and the Upper West Side, the transparency becomes all too apparent. Despite the proletarian fiction of the thirties, one learned that not all workers looked like WPA statues. An unfortunate truth, perhaps, but even children of the working class survived the learning of it. Just so, Mr. Hoagland should survive learning that the great majority of Negroes and Puerto Ricans on the Upper West Side are neither exuberant nor spontaneous; instead, they are angry, sullen, hostile, and suspicious, in short, very much like whites on relief. For all its imaginative children and raucous street life, Mr. Hoagland's 83rd Street doesn't exist in my Manhattan.

In what is intended to be a particularly exuberant peccadillo, Ben takes the freest of the free, a Negro prostitute named May who "do like 'em white." Her daughter and her four-year-old son stand observantly by the bed while Mama and the white man have a go at it. Naturally. One assumes that they take it all in stride, even such lines as "Do you get the sense that you're bursting with buds and every day is you?" with which Ben immortalizes this communion of seekers. It's a tough world for all of us, even Ben Pringle.

Although he is obviously a very fine writer, Mr. Hoagland's language frequently gets in his way, another aspect of his using one world – primitive, elemental, loose, and Negro – as a kind of gauge for the other – mannered, formal, restricted, and WASP. Predictably enough, the few pages devoted to the world from which Ben stems prove it to be far more interesting and far more authentic than the Aspinwall. Hoagland's prose is supposed to be loose and buzzing; instead, it turns out to be a barrier against the reality that threatens to break through. Ben Pringle never does encounter his *own* emotions and prejudices. All he encounters is a dream of dark bodies bathed in a purplish sunset. But the knives still glisten in the night.

If Mr. Hoagland is a novelist trying to catch just the right combination of alienation and primitivism, George P. Elliot is a novelist much closer in tone and spirit to my hypothetical James Anderson. One of the better novelists writing in America today, Mr. Elliot numbers among his virtues the ability to create a complex academic milieu without making it into something greater or lesser than what it is.

His latest novel, *In the World* (Viking, $6.95), is an



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interesting attempt to raise the novelist's ante by getting back to the Nineteenth Century. How refreshing it is to find a novelist who still has enough nerve and enough sense of past to take society for granted, to demand of life that it be meaningful. For ours is a time when hysteria and alienation have become as commonplace to novelists as brushing one's teeth. To say that life is absurd and meaningless may have meant something as late as two decades past, but what exactly does it mean today? We have been told so often that the old certainties have been lost to us (as if those certainties were a kind of collective cookie baked in Medieval Europe and eaten well into the Nineteenth Century) that we no longer bother asking exactly what those certainties were. *Who cares?* cries the existential chorus. *I do,* answers George P. Elliot. It is a very Protestant refusal to take the world's chaos for granted, an insistence that people behave as if they are in this world by choice, not necessity.

The protagonist of *In the World* is Alfred Royce, a part-time Professor of Law at Berkeley. The embodiment of the liberal Protestant point of view in our America, he is an ethical, charitable, informed, compassionate, and deeply confused middle-aged man, not at all sure that traditional liberal aims are worth implementing and filled with the sense of purposelessness of a life that suddenly seems all loose ends. Mr. Elliot is largely successful in depicting Alfred Royce and those surrounding him as they really are, unsure of their instincts, unsure of what to demand of life in a time grown increasingly frenetic. But at least they demand. *And* they question. *And* they emerge, one feels, not necessarily as better but as changed people.

### *"How Do I Live?"*

Alfred Royce's middle-aged confrontation with that most Protestant of questions, "What do I live for?" leads to its inevitable corollary, "And how do I live?" The discrepancy between the expectations of Protestant liberalism and the possibilities life offers are presented as a dilemma in which good and evil are blended. And the relationships between the characters are handled with a certain panoramic certainty, another refreshing indication of Mr. Elliot's refusal to subscribe to the absurd way out, to create gesture in place of character. Alfred Royce's confusion is real; his wife's neuroticism is real; the question of whether one should remain a teacher or accept a judgeship is also real. And it is all meaningful, for the world is here and now and to be in it is to be of it.

George P. Elliot is almost the novelist the WASP world has been crying for — almost, but not quite. His deficiency, finally, is the other side of his strength, for if he has enough nerve to take society for granted he does not seem quite able to artistically come to grips with the destructive instincts in modern life. This is not to say that he is unaware of those instincts — in his novels and in his very fine collection of essays, *A Piece of Lettuce,* he demonstrates not only his awareness but also his understanding. But when he is faced with the problem of integrating that aspect of life with the other, his talent seems confused and short of the mark. James works, Anderson doesn't — and what *In the World* lacks is that sense of the grotesque which has stamped much of the best fiction of our century here in America.

One thinks in particular of the scene in which Leon Kalish, an enlightened, priggish Jew, and his girl, Robin Farquhar, an aspiring actress, arrive at the Bell View Trailer Camp run by Robin's mother, Ida Kucinski (whose trailer plot is named Ida's Hida Way), to destroy a romance they have already mangled. But the scene simply does not succeed in making dramatically viable the savage incongruity of life as it is dreamed and lived in California; it does not feed one the angry sadness one feels after reading Anderson, nor does it jangle the nerves as Nathanael West would have done. The ghost of Isabel Archer is present even in Robin Farquhar, and it is an unwanted ghost. Nor does a later scene, in which the dying and pregnant Robin and her homosexual husband, Hugh Hansson, are playing the Young Marrieds in a glass house at the Institute of Modern Living in New York leave us with the taste of ashes in the mouth.

Alfred Royce's problems are refreshing in their very totality, in a man's involvement in public and private ethics. He wants to behave well, a strangely touching desire for a man in our world. "I do not really repudiate our society," Alfred says. "It is corrupt and so on, but I don't think it is about to disintegrate or to turn into an absolutely inhumane monstrosity."

But to measure so moral a declaration of faith against the events of the past fifty years is to be made terribly uncomfortable. Even if one is convinced that it is the only faith one can have today, it is still better left unsaid. Protestant America, however, has always had a strong rhetorical tradition with which to call for the fulfillment of its vision. For George P. Elliot, neither the rhetoric nor the vision seem anachronisms. One can praise him both for that honesty and for his talent. But Mr. Elliot is not quite suited to the task of marrying Winesburg to Park Avenue. And our James Anderson must succeed at no less a task.



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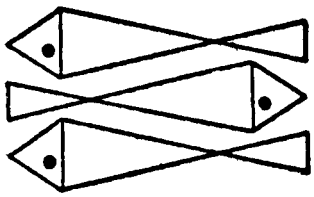

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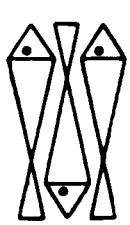

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# THE SCREEN

A cluster of current movies seem to be determined to prove Shaw's adage: "It's a pity that youth is wasted on young people." These films bubble with the energy and imprudent behavior of youth—and, in some cases, that of their elders, too, who aren't much brighter. An import from England, "The Leather Boys," is not only the best of the lot, but is also in the interesting tradition of "A Kind of Loving," "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner," "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning," and "A Taste of Honey" with their factual portraits of city life and their sharp comments on the mores of the lower middle classes.

"The Leather Boys," refers to the jacket-clad young fellows who tear around town and country on their motorcycles (but are not to be confused with the vicious American bully boys led by Marlon Brando in "The Wild Ones"). It concentrates on one in particular, Reggie, a garage mechanic, thoughtfully played by a good-looking young newcomer, Colin Campbell. Reg considers fun-loving, sixteen-year-old Dot the girl of his dreams; and since they have already been riding on his motorcycle and sleeping together, marriage seems to be the ideal solution. Reg is anxious; Dot is happy to win Reg and get away from school and her mother, a self-centered woman who, in turn, is glad to get rid of the girl. Reg's father is more cautious: "He don't earn much." And Dot's teacher is wisest of all; her unheeded "You want to think carefully before you rush into marriage," presages the disaster ahead.

Director Sidney J. Furie, who also did "The Ipcress File," handles the vivid characters and slight plot in Gillian Freeman's screenplay with great skill and with an emotional impact that rises above the grim story. Rita Tushingham, by no means as attractive or appealing as she was in "The Knack" and her earlier films, is superb as Dot, the stupid, selfish teenage tart-in-the-making who has no idea at all what being a wife means. The honeymoon in an enormous vulgar hotel-camp is a flop; and then after six months of marriage, it's no wonder that Reg complains about Dot's housekeeping, her canned beans for dinner every night, her cracker crumbs in bed, her gum-chewing during sex, her complete lack of sympathy for his much-loved, newly-widowed grandmother. And it's no wonder that Reg hangs out with the Leather Boys more and more, and pals with Pete whose wisecracks are as fast as his motorcycle and whose disdain for Dot equals her fear and contempt for him as she calls the boys "a couple of queers."

Although this story of an unfortunate marriage is not exactly new, it is told so well by director Furie that one is held by the movie throughout—by the good performances (Dudley Sutton and Gladys Henson are excellent as Pete and the grandmother) and by the development of the characters. One doesn't identify with any of these characters, but one suffers for them all—right or wrong. You find yourself pulling most for Reggie; he says all he wants is a normal marriage. Perhaps the trouble with

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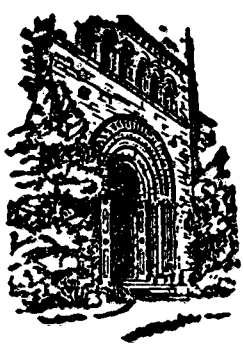

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"The Leather Boys" is that it's too real. Its last ten minutes are heart-breaking.

Compared with "The Leather Boys," the other films about young people are too slick, too slight, and too obvious. "Red Line 7000," produced and directed by Howard Hawks, tells a story of car racing, the youthful drivers, and the girls who can't resist them (just why they can't is never made clear, especially when the movie ends up with the line: "It's a hell of a way to make a living"). The races shown in the movie at Daytona, Darlington, and on other tracks are tense with excitement, suspense and accidents; and at times the story is too. Among the newcomers Hawks chose to play these lead roles, James Caan, as a difficult, surly fellow, and pretty Marianna Hill, as the girl who falls in love with him, stand out. The main trouble with the film, however, is that all its boys and girls are too good looking, and unbelievably pair off in the right sets in spite of all the falling in and out of cars and beds.

The young folk in "Never Too Late" should have stood in bed instead of taking up our time with their protests against the girl's middle-aged parents' having a baby. This movie, based on the long-running stage play about the problems of a couple about to face parenthood again, is really a one-joke affair. The parents, played by Maureen O'Sullivan and Paul Ford, are a delight—even though the joke eventually wears thin. But what really spoils the movie are Connie Stevens, as their daughter, and Jim Hutton, as their son-in-law, who are dismayed at the older generation and so work overtime to have a baby of their own. Whether or not they do, no one cares.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

## BOOKS

# CRITICS' CHOICES FOR CHRISTMAS

***WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM***

*Images of Hope.* By William F. Lynch, S.J. (Helicon, $5.95) The boldness of Teilhard de Chardin is his daring to preach optimism on the scale of evolutionary time. Lynch is even bolder, for he grounds his optimism in the limited and the human, and develops a psychology and metaphysics of hope on the scale of human time. His is above all a healing vision. Against the American grain, Lynch defends the manliness of dependence on others and against the ascetic tradition of indifference asserts the autonomy of wishing. "The speech of a good man,"*Proverbs* tell us, "is a well of life." The sentence describes the book and its author.

*The Moral Teaching of the New Testament.* By Rudolf Schnackenburg. (Herder & Herder, $7.50) This book does have two faults: its presentation is heavy and forbidding; the author ignores the action of the Gospels and of Acts, which is central to the moral teaching of the New Testament. In every other respect, it is superb. Schnackenburg compliments his reader by refusing to update the New Testament; instead, he makes it contemporary with itself, showing what it meant to those who wrote it and lived it, and concludes that "the task which they performed then for their communities is still ours to fulfill in our own times: with equal ardor in faith, equal moral earnestness and above all equal eschatological vigilance, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus." His delineation of what they taught is the necessary framework for determining what Christian action might be today.

*Baal, Christ, and Mohammed.* By John K. Cooley. (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $8.95) From time to time there appears a book that is amazing simply because it has not been written before. Cooley's survey of "religion and revolution in North Africa" is just such a book. The author presents no substantial new data, no brilliant new interpretations. His achievement is more modest and, perhaps, more important: he weaves together strands of North African religious and political history, elsewhere kept separate, into a single tapestry that extends in time from ancient Phoenicia to the present day. We have long needed a summation of North Africa; without one, neither Augustine nor Algeria makes full sense. In *Baal, Christ, and Mohammed* we have a book that does the job and does it well.

*Job.* Translated with an introduction and notes by Marvin H. Pope. (The Anchor Bible, Doubleday, $6.00) Pope phrases the question succinctly: ". . . how can a man put his faith in such a One Who is the Slayer of all?" And he finds the answer in Job, the everyman of faith, whose journey from despair "is the way each mortal must go." The translation, too, is altogether satisfying, its poetry terse, harsh, fragmented: "Damn the day I was born,/The night that said, 'A boy is begot.'/That day—let it be darkness." *Job* stands out even in this most distinguished of publishing projects.

*Belief and Unbelief.* By Michael Novak. (Macmillan, $4.95) This essay



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toward a philosophy of self-knowledge is Novak's best work, a viable approach to the fundamental option of belief in our day. Novak grasps the "hidden unity of spirit" between the serious believer and nonbeliever, which is their shared fidelity to understanding and love; he grasps the pain that is life without God and the improbability that is life with God; he grasps "that God is equally hidden from believer and from nonbeliever" and that the choice of belief is a choice of identity, a decision concerning what it is to be a man. There is much to argue with here (self-knowledge, for example, can come close to narcissism) but it is the kind of argument we need, perhaps the only kind we can be sure is worth having.

***JOHN TRACY ELLIS***

*A History of Ushaw College.* By David Milburn. (Ushaw Bookshop, Durham, England $4.50) At a time when the Church's seminaries are undergoing close scrutiny all over the world it is enlightening to have this richly documented story of Saint Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, from 1794 to 1962, for many of the problems faced by this important major seminary in the north of England were – and are – similar to those now confronting the Church's seminaries in this country and in other lands.

*The Prison Meditations of Father Alfred Delp.* (Herder and Herder. $4.50) It is relatively easy to write soothing words, but the impression at times left by some authors is that the words come too readily to have been deeply felt and experienced. But when a man writes in the face of certain death (Father Delp was executed by the Nazis in early February, 1945), what he says has a far more meaningful ring. "All you tired people who . . . hardly know how to hold the tattered rags of your lives together, believe me that all those surface disturbances can serve to convince us of God's indisputable nearness and reality."

*Rebel Bishop. The Life and Era of Augustin Verot.* By Michael V. Gannon. (Bruce Publishing Company. $4.95) If many readers shy away from ecclesiastical history, it may be due to the wooden and unreal manner in which it has so often been told. Father Gannon's life of the first Bishop of Saint Augustine, Florida, is entirely free of those unhappy characteristics. Here is a vibrant and unconventional bishop (d. 1876) with arresting things to say on issues that are still alive in the American Church, e.g., the Negro apostolate. He has had the good fortune to have as his biographer a man who is at the same time a careful scholar and a writer with a keen sensitivity for the English language.

*The Italians.* By Luigi Barzini. (Atheneum. $6.95) Not only has Barzini a remarkable facility for English literary style for one to whom it is not a native tongue, but what is equally engaging, this portrait of his own people reveals how deeply read he is in the sources of Italian history and literature, how perceptive are his judgments of Italian strength and weakness, and – to borrow an expression of D.W. Brogan's – how much "a part of the national furniture" is the Catholic Church and her clergy. True, one might wish that more attention had been given to the role of the lower clergy in Italian life, yet the treatment of the high clergy is basically authentic, and Barzini's complete awareness of the anti-clerical strain in so much of Italian history furnishes at times tart comments without ever leaving a real sting.

*Honesty in the Church.* By Daniel Callahan. (Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.95). A compelling treatise on the need for honest and open dealing on the part of Catholics of every rank, i.e., honesty with each other and honesty with those of other faiths. Were I asked to designate what, in my judgment, has been the major stumbling block to the progress of the apostolate and to the acceptance of the Church's credentials by those outside her fold, I would say that in one way or another the principal obstacle in modern times is traceable to the failure of her spokesmen and representatives



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to practice strict truthfulness and honesty in all that pertains to the Church's life. The point might be expressed in the words of the late Father Henry Tristram who knew so well the mind of Cardinal Newman, and who said of him, "He was at once repelled by the slightest pretence or insincerity or humbug, and it was a strong condemnation from him, if he said, so and so is so unreal." Mr. Callahan's book offers a salutary lesson against the dangers of being "unreal."

*Pope John and His Revolution.* By E. E. Y. Hales. (Doubleday & Company, Inc. $4.95) The historian of Pius VII and Pius IX has now turned to the beloved John XXIII in an approach that is quite different from any of the numerous books that have so far appeared. Mr. Hales, an English convert to Catholicism in 1949, has read the available sources in a highly perceptive way, e.g., the late pontiff's spiritual diary. These have furnished him with material for some rather uncommon judgments about Pope John Some of the puzzling actions of John XXIII, as well as a number of his appointments to high posts in the Church, will be better understood after reading this book. The author confesses that it has been deliberately written in an effort to show that in the matters of papal policy Angelo Roncalli knew what he was about, that his policy was original but is already in danger of becoming obscured.

***NAT HENTOFF***

*The Next Generation.* By Donald Michael. (Random House, $4.95) A chilling projection of what this society is likely to become within the next twenty years, especially for the young. Michael, a member of the Institute for Policy Studies, non-polemically predicts the effects of cybernation and the accelerating organization of private as well as public life. He foresees – unless there is basic change in the direction of planning and in the sources of power in the society – an increasingly divided society with a small, elitist managerial-technocrat corps at


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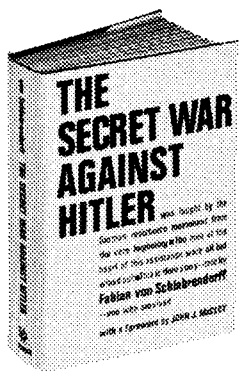


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the top. The book, I feel, is an essential introductory counter-argument to the many Dr. Panglosses among us.

*The Hobbit* and *The Ring Cycle* (Volumes 1 to 3). By J. R. R. Tolkien. (Houghton Mifflin, $3.95 and $5.95) I am late in coming to these books, which are ostensibly for children (especially *The Hobbit*) but actually comprise a sweepingly plotted morality play for adults. The setting and the time, to be sure, are not "contemporary," but Tolkien's values and concerns are – or should be – timeless. On one level, a richly textured tale of fantasy. On another, an examination of imperfect good and watchful evil.

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* By Malcolm X with Alex Haley (Grove Press, $7.50). An odyssey of pain, rage and a series of conversions. More complex than most Americans considered him to be, Malcolm X was a penetrating observer of and participant in several microcosms of black American life which still remain opaque to nearly all whites. His transcending of Elijah Muhammad's eschatology toward the end of his life was bringing Malcolm X to a new position of potential power and influence that could have made him a pervasively clarifying leader of the underclass. The book underscores the extent to which his death was a national loss by going beneath the public rhetoric into the vulnerable but persistently growing private man.

*People or Personnel.* By Paul Goodman. (Random House, $4.95). A characteristically provocative analysis of how to preserve ourselves from paternalism, however benevolently protective in intention. Goodman is for decentralization wherever possible, and the value of his book consists of the wide range of practical possibilities he sees.

He does not address himself to the problems of acquiring the political power to enable a change in the tidal thrust toward ever increasing rationalization of people into personnel, but he does indicate ways of utilizing that power if it can ever be achieved by those not yet computerized.

*How to Talk Dirty and Influence People.* By Lenny Bruce. (Playboy Press/Trident Press, $5). The only radical humorist of our time, Lenny Bruce persists, at considerable personal cost, in confronting us with our most sanctified hypocrisies and self-evasions. His book is part autobiography (picaresque and poignant) and part a dissection of how we think we live by contrast with the naked lunch actually at the end of the fork.

### WALTER KERR

*I Lost It at the Movies.* By Pauline Kael. (Little, Brown, $6) All reviewing becomes muffled sooner or later by the urge to qualify or justify or just go home and lie down, and so it comes as a relief to hear a movie reviewer speaking as though, after a long period of nearly bursting, she'd only this minute been permitted to break silence. You don't have to agree with Miss Kael about *Jules and Jim* or anything else, but you'll feel she's doing her act without a net.

*Contraception.* By John T. Noonan, Jr. (Harvard, $7.95) Because the subject is not going to go away, it is gratifying to have, finally, an exhaustive and coherent account of the Catholic Church's teaching on birth control as it has evolved over centuries of contending pressures and responses. Indispensable for any discussion that means to be more than merely animated.

*The Myth and the Powerhouse.* By Philip Rahv. (Farrar, Straus, $4.95) Mr. Rahv feels – he says so in his introduction – that some of the essays collected in this volume of literary criticism have already lost their immediate usefulness, but they haven't. Even though a particular hysteria – for fuzzying up the meaning of myth, or for detecting symbols in a publisher's colophon – may have subsided for the moment, it will be back, which makes it satisfying to have these careful, reasonably courteous, and stubbornly central analyses at hand.

*Hymn to the Universe.* By Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. (Harper & Row, $3) Prayers, reflections, unselfconscious and earnestly committed poems – to



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matter, among other things – by the hard-headed visionary who seems to me to have most radically altered the depressed vision of the age. The things that have dragged at our hearts he has made exhilarating.

*Martin Chuzzlewit.* By Charles Dickens. I'm glad I skipped this earlier, because it made my summer.

***RICHARD KOSTELANETZ***

*The Widening Gyre.* By Joseph Frank. (Rutgers. $6.00) It is shameful that this book was hardly noticed when it first appeared, for it contains some extremely profound writing on the modern imagination. The opening essay, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," is a seminal work, so intense in style and thought that it achieves a quality more characteristic of art itself –it can be reread with increasing insight.

The other essays, on topics as various and yet essential as Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus,* André Malraux's fiction and art criticism, Robert Penn Warren's major fiction, the work of John Peale Bishop, the criticism of Lionel Trilling all have, as Allen Tate says in his foreword, "the disquieting gift of going to the heart of whatever matter [Frank] undertakes to expound."

*The Anxious Object.* By Harold Rosenberg. (Horizon. $7.50) No one else writes as well about contemporary art, achieving not only a pithy style (that other critics envy) but a breadth and originality of insight into all phases of the art scene–the stylistic character and significance of the art itself, its intellectual and artistic antecedents, the changing shape and interests of its audience, the politics of reputations, and the relations between these matters. The following aphorism on the realistic impulse in art is a gem: "One man's reality is another man's fantasy and a third man's corn."

*Shadow and Act.* By Ralph Ellison. (Random House. $5.95) On no other subject do we hear and read more outright nonsense than Negro life in America, because, first, so much is tailored (often sub-consciously) to meet the white readership's preconceptions of Negro life and, more important, even more writing is concocted out of these preconceptions by "experts" (both Negro and white) who simply do not know typical Negro life at first hand. What Ellison tells us, with constant reference to his own experience, is that social disadvantage, while disagreeable, is hardly debilitating; indeed, most of the problems of life a Negro faces have nothing to do with discrimination. Moreover, the most conclusive evidence of the strength of Negro America lies precisely in creating a viable culture within such adverse conditions. He also reprints two interviews with himself, several literary essays, some cultural commentary, all of which display his unusual freedom from cant and cliché and Ellison's immense resources of intellect.

*Roar Lion Roar.* By Irvin Faust. (Random House. $3.95) A professional

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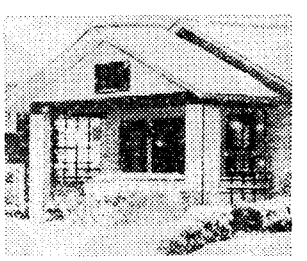

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psychologist—a Ph.D. from Columbia, a high school guidance counselor by trade—Irvin Faust exhibits in most of these short stories an extraordinary talent for creating convincing portraits of a variety of madnesses, most of them probably not his own. He can effectively present frantically disconnected thoughts, evoke obsessions, show how a mad mind can confuse fantasy and reality, trace a catharsis—all without any traces of the psychologist's jargon and schemata, all in a language as intense as it is elegant.

*Understanding Media.* By Marshall McLuhan. (McGraw-Hill. $7.50) It took me three readings to appreciate this badly written, ill-organized essay on the significance of media—electronic means of communication; but McLuhan's originality and brilliance overcome the blocks he puts in their path. If there is meaning in the fact that the two favorable commissioned reviews I wrote on the book—one for an American magazine; the other for an English — both went unpublished, it would be an enormous resistance on the part of literary people to his central idea. The major revolution in the modern sensibility, he says, is a shift from linear forms of organization and comprehension (symphonies; magazines; books) to spatial or disjointed patterns (television; movies; newspapers). As a print man myself, I find this future less congenial than McLuhan does; but one should be grateful to him for identifying what is truly radical in our contemporary culture.

**WILSON C. McWILLIAMS**

*The Accidental Century.* By Michael Harrington. (Macmillan, $5.95) The modern West is dying, yet in their fear of and for the future, men cluster around outworn faiths or give up thought altogether. Harrington has already demonstrated his willingness to discard the old creeds, and his ability to write persuasively and at times brilliantly about the crisis of the times. Here, his treatment is broad-ranging, spanning nearly a century of thought and of social change, and in any such treatment there are bound to be thin points in the ice of theory. Harrington, however, is worth disagreeing with; in any case, as he remarks, every man invents his own Nietzsche, and if my *Zarathustra* differs from his I would not forfeit his analysis of Dostoevsky, which is one of the most perceptive to appear in print. In terms of the atmosphere of decay—the decay of idea and of the poor—and the social process which helped to produce it, the book is almost impeccable and a good starting point for any understanding of the times.

*Coming of Age in America.* By Edgar Z. Friedenberg. (Random House, $5.95) If Harrington spans the centuries, Friedenberg limits himself to the rather confined frontiers of the American secondary school. Yet it is precisely his merit that in his own excellent, caustic prose Friedenberg reveals how limited those boundaries are. The secondary school seems dedicated to producing a bland ethic of success and conformity; to de-emphasizing the ancient relations of friendship and of fraternity; to discouraging imagination and to stultifying the spirit. To these "aristocratic" criticisms, Friedenberg adds another: that from almost the same defects, the secondary school fails to genuinely educate the poor. This is an essential book for anyone who would understand the strange and sometimes horrifying world of young America; it is especially valuable as a corrective to the often egregious statements of supposedly eminent social scientists on the crisis at Berkeley and on the college campus generally.

*Statesmanship and Party Government.* By Harvey Mansfield, Jr. (University of Chicago, $7.50) Mansfield's analysis is thorough, precise, clearly and often movingly written: it is an example of what is best in the academic tradition. A study of Burke and Bolingbroke, Mansfield's analysis provides another dimension of the problem which Friedenberg and Harrington address in their very different way: the political and social crisis in the West. It might well have been titled, "Burke and the Decay of Statecraft," for though Mans-



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field appreciates Burke's many virtues, he concludes with the damning observation that "Statemanship in Burke has lost . . . its connection to political philosophy. . . . he reduced statesmanship to the rules of prudence . . . he demoted statesmanship to conservatism." That tendency, as Harrington would agree, has only become more marked in the face of change, yet because of change itself may be the most perilous shortcoming in the political life of modern man.

*The Lord of the Rings.* By J. R. R. Tolkien. (3 vol., Houghton Mifflin, each $5.95) and *Cat's Cradle.* By Kurt Vonnegut. (Holt, $3.95) Tolkien is now a perennial, yet his appeal is ascending among those students and those citizens who would recover the habit of imagination, of moral clarity, and of political vision. Tolkien is the master of the riddle, the chief defender of the proposition that thought may be amusing and possibly profitable. Vonnegut is a sub-variant, a modern form of the ancient and honorable tradition in which Tolkien stands. Both represent a genre of literature which becomes daily more essential, for if the West demands the "idea of the legislator" which Mansfield suggests is the culmination of statecraft, it must first recapture the spirit of the riddler and the teller of tales who could perform the act which Machiavelli sought to banish from political thought: the imagining of states which have never been.

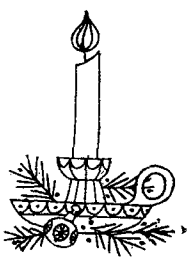
**SAUL MALOFF**

*Everything That Rises Must Converge.* By Flannery O'Connor. (Farrar, Straus, $4.95) The beautifully controlled and shaped and deeply reverberent posthumous stories of one of the finest writers of her generation. If the form survives into the next century (and if we do), her best stories will surely be among those which survivors will read – with astonishment and awe that we who produced the American city and foreign policy produced her too.

*Dog Years.* By Gunther Grass. (Harcourt, $6.95) The German novelist's exuberance of invention and boisterousness of imagination produce some wild excesses; but though the final result is wildly uneven, they yield a Brueghelesque harvest as well. Everything about the book is monstrously oversized; but that is one way of scaling scathing, saturnine (sometimes, I believe, called "black") comedy.

*The Mandelbaum Gate.* By Muriel Spark. (Knopf, $5.95) Mrs. Spark's immensely fecund comic imagination exercises itself here with profligate good spirits. The sheer complications of plot are in themselves first-rate comedy; and the minor characterizations, especially, are marvelous. That the mystic, or spiritual, implications of this comedy of identity are never substantially embodied dramatically doesn't really matter. Mrs. Spark is not the first novelist to discover the intransigence of transcendence.

*Coming of Age in America.* By Edgar Friedenberg. (Random House, $5.95) Professor Friedenberg is by all odds the

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*The New Radicalism.* By Christopher Lasch. (Knopf, $6.95) A suggestive, infuriating, cunning, brilliant (misleadingly entitled) study of some middle-class American radicals, including Jane Addams and Lincoln Steffens, and of the phenomenon and psychodynamics of middle-class radicalism.

*Manchild in the Promised Land.* By Claude Brown. (Macmillan, $5.95) Claude Brown is no writer and his editors sinned in allowing the book to stand as it is; but the book succeeds despite itself in conjuring up some harrowing images of what it is like to be born black in Harlem. To a dismaying degree, Brown is putting us on; but enough grit and authenticity break through to compel anguish.

***ALICE MAYHEW***

*The Changing Sister,* Edited by Sister Charles Borromeo Muckinhirn, C.S.C. (Fides, $2.95.) This collection of essays is not just for or about religious. It is a genuine contribution to the prevailing discussion of the Church in the world, of renewal and relevance. Sister Charles Borromeo's essay, "Apostolic Holiness: The Christian Dynamics," poses and illuminates the central discussion of balanced and total witness. It is a brilliant article, moving beyond the sometimes abstract though profound insights of Marcel, into the historical world where the Spirit works, and where Christianity is not an idea but a mode of being. The other eight essays are all good. Sister Marie Augusta Neal, S.N.D., is exceptionally strong and concrete on the sociology of community change, and Sister Aloysius Schaldenbrand, S.S.J.'s article, "Personal Fulfillment and Apostolic Effectiveness," specifically treats the sisters' problems, but in considering the whole question of the Christian personality. The Sisters may lead us back into the world yet.

*Everything That Rises Must Converge.* By Flannery O'Connor. (Farrar, Straus, $4.95) Published posthumously, this collection of short stories is among the most polished, least contrived and most compassionate of Flannery O'Connor's works. The theological structuring is less obtrusive than in some of her previous books, and it seems that the sometimes jarring and constrictive neo-Gothicism was shattering under the impact of an increasing strength and gripping reality. Some of the stories are as good as *The Violent Bear it Away;* "Revelation" is almost perfect.

*The Mandelbaum Gate.* By Muriel Spark. (Knopf, $5.95) Stylistically, this is a pivotal book in Mrs. Spark's career; it is the most important and complex book she has written. The pyrotechnics are even more brilliant and the manner is less evasive and, of course, there is the famous Spark wit. The theme is the same, or similar: it is a drama of pilgrimage and grace, of God's presence and the devil's in this world which is filled with good and bad, silly and pretentious and loving people, spendthrifts, cheapskates, absurdities and troubled realities. Mrs. Spark takes a sane and broadminded view of human nature and possibilities for salvation.

*The Mystery of Death.* By Ladislaus Boros, S.J., (Herder and Herder, $4.50) Father Boros proposes that we think about death, not in terms of a dissolution or an endurance of suffering, but as that "moment above all others for the awakening of consciousness, for freedom, for the encounter with God, for the final decision about his eternal destiny." This Christological, personalist approach is deeply optimistic and evolutionist. He elucidates and continues Teilhard's intuition of the open clarity of the universe.

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* By Malcolm X, and assisted by Alex Haley. (Grove $7.50) This fascinating



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man was misinterpreted and maligned when he was alive. Most of his observers either never believed or took cognizance of Malcolm's *second* conversion when he came to realize that all white men were not evil. He began then to hate the evil, rather than the evil doer, and was ironically, at his death, moving toward the mainstream of the Negro protest movement.

*Kennedy.* By Theodore C. Sorenson. (Harper and Row, $10.00) Long and a little dry, both defensive and loving, but scrupulous with detail and very intimate to where the action was in these famous and important years, this account of Kennedy's years is irreplaceable.

***GARRY WILLS***

*Virgil, A Study in Civilized Poetry.* By Brooks Otis. (Oxford, $7.20) This book, part one of an important multi-volumed study of Latin epic, makes the point that Virgil did not so much revive a form as create one. Homer is a foil for that radically "modern" poem, the Aeneid—a poem whose vast "anachronistic" structure was made possible by the invention of a new way of suffusing event with emotion. Otis argues, in effect, that Ruskin's famous "pathetic fallacy" is not, as Ruskin thought, a post-classical perversion, but the brilliant invention of this classical poet. This should interest anyone concerned with the range of viable poetic forms within any culture.

*The Revelation of John.* By Richmond Lattimore. (Harcourt, $3.25) This book appeared several years back, but dropped down the well of New York's penultimate newspaper strike, and — as Professor Lattimore has remarked — never bobbed up again. It renders the Greek with lyrical economy, offering a model for others who are translating the New Testament (and, one hopes, a sample of further work on the Bible by Lattimore himself).

*Contraception.* By John T. Noonan, Jr. (Harvard, $7.95) This is not only *the* book on the subject, but an important contribution to that rescue operation which must reclaim the natural law from the Stoics. The main text on natural law (*Romans* 2:14) looks more to the psalmist (e.g., number 110/111) than to Musonius Rufus — to creation as a medium for meaningful dialogue with the Creator, not as a divine machine inexorably unwinding its way to *ekyrosis.*

*The Framework of the New Testament Stories.* By Arnold Ehrhardt. (Harvard, $7.00) Ehrhardt is an impish scholar whose cleverness sometimes betrays him into the fanciful (e.g., linking *Luke* 16.8 to Thucydides II. 40.3) or the sensationalistic (e.g., rendering *Galatians* 2.6 as "those brass-hats have put no strings on me"); but his originality lights up many passages in this fine set of essays, and there is a particularly good analysis of the historical artistry that went into the construction of the *Acts of the Apostles.*

*The Doorbell Rang.* By Rex Stout. (Viking, $3.95) It is a form of literary overkill to use Nero Wolfe, who is one


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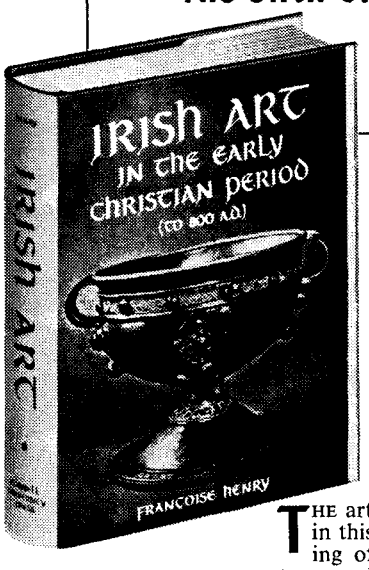


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of the demigods, to quash J. Edgar Hoover, who is only a great man — as if Doyle had made Holmes solve Homeric problems in competition with Gladstone, or Poe had sicked Dupin on Diel Webster. As the spiritual inhabitants of Baker St. put up with the table-rapping and other irregularities of Holmes's inventor, Nerophiles learned long ago that the books Stout plugs in each novel are often down at the Fred Cook level. There is a division of labor involved: the man who gives us a god cannot be asked to do much more. Aficionados will remember this as the one in which Cramer bought Archie a carton of milk.

**GEORGE WOODCOCK**

*The Mahabharata: an English Version based on Selected Verses.* By Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan. (Columbia, $6.00) The vast Indian epic, with its 100,000 verses (the world's longest poem by a massive lead) has always been endurable by Westerners only in drastically abridged form. This is one of the best such versions, honed down to present the great central story of the poem with clarity and vigor. It does for the Indian epic what E. V. Rieu's prose translations did for Homer—or rather for his modern readers.

*The Anarchists.* By James Joll. (Atlantic, Little-Brown, $6.00) A life ago a handful of terrorists gave Anarchists a bad name which few of them deserved. Recently their movement has been brought back into the daylight of history. One of the best studies is James Joll's, concerned mainly with the philosophic and psychological aspects of the Anarchists. His analysis is excellent, and his account of the personalities of the men who first discovered the fly in the Marxist ointment is evocatively fascinating.

*Conquest of Violence.* By Joan V. Bondurant. (University of California, $1.75) Gandhi gathered many disciples, but inspired so much devotion that good objective accounts of his theory and practice are rare. Joan Bondurant's is one, and its re-publication in an expanded paperback edition is therefore welcome—doubly so at a time when, in the United States and elsewhere, Gandhian techniques of civil disobedience are being used and discussed so widely.

*O Canada.* By Edmund Wilson. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $4.95) An experienced natural historian looks at a new territory. Edmund Wilson on Canada is, as always, idiosyncratic, brilliant and incomplete. His Canada goes no farther west than Toronto, and centers on Montreal, the most exotic point on the country's map. Bomb-throwers and Gothic novelists fascinate him. He presents one of the best impressionist accounts of Quebec separatism, and some fine analyses of Quebec writers. The omissions, however, are vast and capricious.

*India's Ex-Untouchables.* By Harold R. Isaacs. (John Day, $4.50) A book as uncomfortable as truth often must be. Mr. Isaacs has faced a problem which Indian scholars themselves have understandably avoided. His account of the plight of India's 65-million "Ex"-Untouchables reveals a problem barely scratched in modern India; his verbatim reports of interviews with these people so unjustly marked by birth are starkly moving.

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**CRITICS**

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM *is editor of Mentor-Omega Books.*

MSGR. JOHN TRACY ELLIS *is the author of* Catholics in Colonial America.

NAT HENTOFF *is the author of* The New Equality (*Viking*).

WALTER KERR, *formerly drama critic for* COMMONWEAL, *is drama critic for the N. Y.* Herald Tribune.

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ *edited* The New American Arts (*Horizon*).

WILSON C. MC WILLIAMS *co-authored* Crisis and Continuity in World Politics.

SAUL MALOFF *is Books Editor at* Newsweek.

ALICE MAYHEW *is on the staff of a New York publishing house.*

GARRY WILLS *is the author of* Politics and Catholic Freedom (*Regnery*).

GEORGE WOODCOCK's Anarchism *is now available as a Meridian paperback.*

KENNETH L. WOODWARD *is Religion Editor at* Newsweek.



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*The Woeful Victorian.* By Phyllis Grosskurth. (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, $6.95) An account of another kind of untouchable. John Addington Symonds was a brilliant amateur historian and critic, a minor Victorian poet. He was also a man of great charm, a fine conversationalist, an admirable letter writer. All this Dr. Grosskurth has caught in one of the best biographies I have read for a long time. She has also presented sensitively the darker side of Symonds' life, his tragic struggle, as a homosexual in the Victorian world, to understand and deal with his predicament. And all against a finely detailed background of upper middle class, nineteenth century manners and mannerisms and mores.

**KENNETH L. WOODWARD**

*The Secular City.* By Harvey Cox. (Macmillan paperback $1.45) If today's "involved" Christian is sounding a bit more-secular-than-thou, it's probably because he's been reading this hip little paperback which raises secularity almost to the level of an eschatological category. Cox's secular city is paradigmatic, a city of choice rather than necessity, a kind of mobile constructed out of carefully selected elements, both sacred and profane, which has become more of a conversation piece than a working model of reality. That Karl Barth turns out to be the theologian of the secular city, and that a Baptist should tell the world how to be secular, are just two of the engaging ironies of this thoroughly engaging book.

*Everything That Rises Must Converge.* By Flannery O'Connor. (Farrar, Straus, $4.95) The late Miss O'Connor had a grimly Gothic humor which at bottom resembled Blake more than Faulkner. Her angle of vision was oddly Biblical for a Roman Catholic, and her narrative discipline all the more remarkable for the burdens she made it carry. Three of the stories – "The Enduring Chill," "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "Revelation" – are alone worth the price. Robert Fitzgerald provides a discerning and affectionate biographical introduction to a modern master of the short story.

*Honesty in the Church.* By Daniel Callahan. (Scribners, $3.95) Callahan's pursuit of a difficult theme is cool in its detachment, practical in aim and subtly explosive in its implications. He knows all the public dodges as well as most of the private tricks of mind and heart by which the Catholic can evade that naked encounter with himself and his God which we used to call faith. If the Vatican Council has been a kind of peek through the fingers at what the Church can, at its best, be like, Callahan's book is a series of program notes on what it ought to be like. For his efforts, Callahan certainly deserves another National Catholic Book Award, or even something better –say, an official proscription by Cardinal McIntyre.

*Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists.* By John T. Noonan, Jr. (Harvard, $7.95) No one, most especially the members of the Pope's Birth Control Commission, can fully discuss contraception without reference to this book. Noonan brings to the tangle of issues surrounding contraception what common sense tells us should have been there in the first place: sound scholarship, prodigous research, a sure grasp of historical contexts and a lively appreciation for the relevant interplay between cultural assumptions and ethical theories. Already the definitive work in its field, *Contraception* sets a new, more exacting standard for historical analysis of moral theology. What's more, it makes fascinating reading.

## CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 261*)

is support for the Vietnam policy in the ruling circles of such countries as Thailand, Formosa, South Korea. It would not greatly surprise me if Mr. Wall were to be impressed by such support. I am not. Neither of us has to go to Bangkok to find out why.

J. M. CAMERON

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*Günter Grass/all that crowd*
*who knew the Bible like the back*
*of their hand.*
*That would cause/one hell of a*
*fuss.*
*Sand in the gears/Imprimatur*
*troubles*
*People going to other parishes*
*People (other people)* reading
*the stuff.*
*Pretty tough on homilists, follow-*
*ing an act like that.*
*But the people who kept coming to*
*Mass,*
*who began to come to Mass*
*to see if it was anything/like the*
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# Urgent:
# Won't you help Eugenia?

***EUGENIA VENTURANZA D. FERRER, FILIPINA, AGE 8. One of five children. Father dead. Malaria. Mother predisposed to TB. Eugenia helps peddle vegetables when not in school. Mother walks many miles each working day from 4:30 A.M. to late at night. Earns less than 33¢ a day. Not enough to feed family regularly. Miss many meals. Only coffee for breakfast. Children in rags. Live in shack. Floor bamboo. Roof woven grass. Mother sick with despair for children she cannot feed and clothe adequately. Help to Eugenia means help to whole family.***

**You or your group can become a Foster Parent of a needy child. You will be sent the case history and photo of your "adopted" child and letters from the child himself. Correspondence is translated by PLAN. The child knows who you are. At once he is touched by love and a sense of belonging. Your pledge provides new clothing, blankets, education and medical care, as well as a cash grant of $8 every month. Each child receives full measure of material aid from your contribution. Distribution of goods is supervised by PLAN staff and is insured against loss in every country where PLAN operates. Help in the responsible way. "Adopt" a child through Foster Parents' Plan. Let some child love you.**

**PLAN is a non-political, non-profit, non-sectarian, government-approved, independent relief organization, registered under No. VFA-019 with the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid of the Agency for International Development of the United States Government and filed with the National Information Bureau in New York City. Check your charity—we eagerly offer our financial statement on request because we are so proud of the handling of our funds. PLAN helps children in Greece, South Korea, Viet Nam, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Colombia and Ecuador.**

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## Foster Parents' Plan, Inc.

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FOSTER PARENTS' PLAN, INC. COM-12-65
352 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10010

In Canada: P.O. Box 65, Sta. B, Montreal, Que.

A. I wish to become a Foster Parent of a needy child for one year or more. If posible, sex....., age....., nationality.....
I will pay $15 a month for one year or more ($180 per year).
Payment will be monthly ( ), quarterly ( ), semi-annually ( ), annually ( ).
I enclose herewith my first payment $.....

B. I cannot "adopt" a child but I would like to help a child by contributing $.....

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....Zip .....

Date .....

*Contributions are Income Tax deductible.*



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